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Israel

Deputy Minister Netanyahu said that the U.S. policy of linking the loan guarantees to a freeze in settlement activity "means returning Israel to the Auschwitz borders," according to a report on his remarks broadcast by Jerusalem television. The same report spoke of "an inevitable and unprecedented clash between the United States and Israel regarding the policy and ideology of the Israeli Government." After meeting with a UN envoy, the defense minister welcomed the recent Lebanese move against the firing of katyushas into Israel, Jerusalem radio reported. If the guarantees are not granted, the finance minister has an "alternative plan" "which has nothing to do with the Israeli economy," he told Tel Aviv radio; Yitzhaq Moda'i refused to discuss further details of his plan. A DAVAR reporter investigated recent claims by Ari'el Sharon that there had been 22,000 housing starts in the territories in 1991, and concluded that Sharon had understated the count by about 8,000 housing units.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Palestinian spokesperson 'Ashrawi said her delegation "would be prepared to address other issues in the negotiations, such as self-rule," a move described by a Jordan radio announcer as an "important tactical shift." Interviewed by Jerusalem radio's Arabic service, however, 'Ashrawi said the sides have "two completely different views" on the issue. The Israeli negotiator for talks with the Lebanese and Syrians expressed "surprise" that the Syrian delegation rejected an Israeli paper "based on a proposal they themselves presented to us in the last round of talks," Jerusalem radio reported.

Palestinian Affairs

The PLO denied implicating Iran in the Lockerbie "aviation incident" and rejected a report to that effect published by a London paper and broadcast by Israeli radio, according to a PLO official statement broadcast by Voice of Palestine. That radio broadcast a commentary saying that Secretary of State Baker's remarks on loan guarantees and Israeli settlement activity are "insufficient."

Algeria

Said Guechi, newly named employment minister and a founding member of the Islamic Salvation Front, told Algiers television that while he will not seek to mediate between the government and Islamic parties, "he will not be able to refuse" to do so if asked. Higher State Council Chairman Boudiaf appointed two envoys to explain the current situation to leaders of North American and European countries, Algiers radio reported; one envoy was subsequently received in Washington, Algiers television added.

Libya

The Paris paper LE FIGARO published an interview with al-Qadhdhafi, who discussed the Lockerbie case and other issues. JANA transmitted its version of the interview. The PRC chemical industry minister arrived for talks, the agency disclosed.

Yemen

A Foreign Ministry "responsible source" denied a London paper's report of Israeli preparations for an airlift of Yemeni Jews to Israel, the London paper AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT reported.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Syrian Chief Delegate: Israeli Claims Refuted

JN2502213892 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 2108 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, head of the Syrian Arab delegation to the peace talks, has announced that during today's session the delegation refuted Israeli allegations and slanders about the nature of Syria's position on peace. Speaking to journalists, he said that the delegation proved with evidence that it is Israel that is standing in the way of peace and hindering the current peace process.

Mr. al-'Allaf called on the Israeli side to stop wasting time by raising marginal issues and to get to the essence of the peace process by discussing its foundations, as represented by Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. He pointed out that the Israeli delegation once again had raised the issue of moving the talks out of Washington. The Syrian delegation, he added, stressed its position that the talks should continue in Washington until tangible results along the road to peace have been achieved.

Responding to a question about the possibility of extending the period of the current fourth round of peace talks beyond 4 March, Mr. al-'Allaf said: What matters is making progress. If this is achieved and the parties agree to extend, the Syrian delegation will not object. Asked about U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's linkage between the $10 billion in loan guarantees requested by Israel and a halt to the settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. al-'Allaf stated: It is obvious that Israel's settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories constitutes a primary obstacle in the way of the peace process. It is natural that we welcome any measure that will remove the obstacles and push the peace process forward.

Evaluates Talks

JN2502173192 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Washington—The Arab delegations today held their second meeting with the Israelis within the third round of the peace talks. The first meeting indicated no change in Israel's intransigent position toward all topics of discussion, whether they concerned withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, recognition of legitimate Palestinian rights, or implementation of Resolution 425 on southern Lebanon. Moreover, the meetings within this round coincide with continued oppressive Israeli measures in the occupied Arab territories and provocative and aggressive acts against southern Lebanon. This round, therefore, will have a decisive effect on the future of the peace talks and the peace process, which began with the Madrid conference four months ago. This is especially true if Israel's intransigence continues.

Before today's meeting, Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, head of the Syrian Arab delegation, said that the talks cannot make any progress unless the Israelis comply with the need to discuss the foundations for a just and comprehensive peace in the region, a peace based on international resolutions. Responding to journalists' questions, Mr. al-'Allaf stated that the Syrian delegation raised the subject of southern Lebanon during yesterday's meeting with the Israelis only from the perspective of the impact of Israel's aggressive policy on the peace process. He said that Israel cannot come here and talk about peace while it practices everything that runs against peace and continues its aggressive policy in the region.

'Important Tactical Shift' by Palestinians Seen

JN2602064592 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0530 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Text] Palestinians said yesterday they were only prepared to negotiate with Israel on two issues: stopping settlements of the occupied territories and human right violations there. Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi announced what appeared to be an important tactical shift on the second day of the latest round of U.S.-sponsored peace talks. She said the Palestinians would be prepared to address other issues in the negotiations, such as self-rule for the 1.75 million Arabs of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, only after they were satisfied on these two key points. The new Palestinian emphasis on settlements followed Secretary of State James Baker's demand on Monday for a settlement freeze as a condition for granting Israel's request for $10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees.

'Two Completely Different Views'

JN2502165692 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Interview with Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi by Sa'id Mu'addi; date and place not given—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Mu'addi] Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, what were the subjects discussed during last night's round of talks?

['Ashrawi] The main subject of discussion was the settlement activity and how it constitutes not only an obstacle to peace but also a hindrance to any progress in negotiations over any topic on the agenda. The Palestinian side presented a document about such settlement activity and how it contravenes human rights, international law, and the principles and future of the peace process. The Palestinian concept, as presented at the previous round of talks, was also discussed. The Israeli delegation rejected the facts and arguments presented by the Palestinian side. No progress was made with regard to the substance of these issues. The Israeli side presented two documents—a detailed one about the agenda and another one about Israel's concept of the transitional period. The two documents are currently under discussion.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Hanan, what does the document presented by the Palestinians to the Israeli delegation contain with regard to the transitional period?

['Ashrawi] This document was presented as an overall perspective, structure, and model for the transitional period. The terms of reference and the source of power clearly should be Palestinian. Authority, not only over people, but also over land, resources, decisionmaking, and other issues, should be handed over to the Palestinians gradually. The Israeli concept, on the other hand, seeks to maintain Israeli authority, to separate people from the land, and to preserve the institutions of the occupation as they are with just little changes. We will not discuss these issues now. As I have said, there are two completely different views. While the Palestinians try to prepare things, as well as an infrastructure, to build a state, the Israelis are trying to prevent any progress and to rob the Palestinians of any sort of sovereignty and real authority. [passage omitted]

Jordanian Spokesman on Venue Change, Dates

JN2502185492 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Salim 'Ali Dhiyab report from Washington]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] A short while ago, the Jordanian and Israeli delegations began their second meeting at the U.S. State Department. Sources from the Jordanian delegation told us that the meeting will be important and difficult, with its results determining many subsequent moves. The meeting is still in progress. Prior to this meeting, the Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli delegations held an expanded session to discuss only a number of procedural procedures.

[Begin recording] [Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, Jordanian delegation spokesman] The Israeli side proposed that we move the talks from Washington to a place near the Middle East. The Jordanian and Palestinian delegations expressed the desire to stay in Washington until the negotiations make tangible progress. At any rate, this issue is left to the Jordanian Government to decide, and we will talk about this later. The Jordanian delegation proposed extending the talks until 11 March, instead of 4 March. The Israelis said that they will go back to the Israeli Government to decide on this.

[Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation] The meeting was short. We discussed only procedural issues. I have nothing to report to you. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Al-Majali, 'Ashrawi Comment on Peace Talks

JN2502205592 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Murid Hammad report from Washington]

[Excerpts] Arab and Israeli peace negotiators went into a second day of talks here at the State Department in Washington amid increasing tension over Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. [passage omitted]

The delegations had arrived at the U.S. State Department for the start of the second day of talks. Most of today's discussions centered on Security Council Resolution 242 and its interpretation. The two sides also discussed forming committees to discuss 242 and define points of agreement and disagreement.

[Begin recording] ['Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, head of the Jordanian delegation] The talks are about seriously forming new committees or committees to discuss this and find out how can we get on with the negotiation. As you know, 242 is the basis of all this conference, and unless we come to acceptable and agreeable understanding between the two parties, we will be discussing peace in the air, and I don't think that is what is meant by this round.

[Unidentified reporter] Do you know where the committees will meet?

[Al-Majali] Well, they have not been formed. Tomorrow morning, we will maybe be able to form them, and we are going to meet 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. [end recording]

Last night, the Palestinian and Israeli delegations met in what was described as a strong discussion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. [passage omitted]

[Begin Hanan 'Ashrawi, Palestinian delegation spokesperson, recording] They are refusing to deal with facts, with the reality of the fact that there is an occupation, that they are an occupying power, that there is a Palestinian people on Palestinian soil under occupation and that these rights for the Palestinians are safeguarded by international law and international humanitarian law. These perceptual problems make it impossible to discuss issues of substance or political import and significance, when they constantly resort to vague abstractions and theological arguments. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Lebanon, Syria Reject Israeli View of Security

NC2602091892 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Excerpts] The second day of the fourth round of bilateral negotiations in Washington involved a series of proposals and stands, which so far have produced no practical results. During the negotiations with the Lebanese delegation, Israel proposed the formation of committees to discuss security arrangements and attacked the Syrian presence in Lebanon. This caused tension during the negotiations. [passage omitted]

Lebanese delegation head Ambassador Suhayl Shammas said that a very wide gap exists between the Lebanese and Israeli delegations' stands, but he hoped that the

viewpoints of the two sides will be bridged. He emphasized that any progress requires Israel's withdrawal from the south. Shammas said Lebanon is a free and independent country and that the Israeli occupation cannot be compared with the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

Israeli delegation head Yosef Hadas emphasized that there is a wide gap between the Israeli and Lebanese concepts of peace. He described the Syrian presence in Lebanon as constituting a threat to Israel's security. He indicated that this subject was raised during the meeting and he disclosed that he had presented a practical proposal.

It has been reiterated that the Israeli delegation proposed to the Lebanese delegation that committees be formed to discuss security arrangements. Informed sources ruled out Lebanon's approval of this proposal. [passage omitted]

Our Washington correspondent Nuhad al-Hayik provided us with the following report a short time ago:

[Begin recording] A Lebanese delegation source made light of the Israeli proposal, which Israeli chief delegate Yosef Hadas announced after the Tuesday session. Hadas described it as a practical proposal that will contribute to achieving progress in the talks.

The Lebanese source said that the Israeli side probably wanted to imply positiveness by speaking about the proposal, which, in fact, was only an idea like all the other ideas the Israeli delegation presents during the talks. The source said that this idea was presented when the meeting was about to end, and therefore, the Lebanese delegation asked that this idea be discussed during the next meeting.

Meanwhile, another Lebanese source told us that the Israeli proposal can be studied and that the Lebanese delegation will give its response today. The source did not disclose the contents of the proposal.

The Lebanese source informed us that yesterday's meeting was intense because of the issue raised by Yosi Ben-Aharon, head of the Israeli delegation to the negotiations with the Syrians. Ben-Aharon attacked what he termed the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, which impedes the conclusion of a peace treaty with it. Ben-Aharon added that this is a matter on which one must not keep quiet.

The head of the Lebanese delegation responded to Ben-Aharon's statement twice; once after Monday's meeting and another time after Tuesday's meeting.

Meanwhile, a source in the Syrian delegation affirmed to us that the Israelis raised the issue of the Syrian presence in Lebanon with the Syrian delegation. In response to the Israeli stand, the source rejected equating the Israeli occupation with the Syrian presence which, according to the source, has been in response to a request by the [Lebanese] legitimate authority. The source added that the al-Ta'if agreement regulates the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

The Syrian source said: We are prepared to withdraw if the legitimate authority asks us to do so and proves that it can establish its authority. He referred to the cooperation, brotherhood, and coordination agreement between the two sides and said that Syria's security and Lebanon's security are one and the same.

The Syrian source asked: How can Syria leave Lebanon while the Israeli acts of aggression against the south are continuing." [end recording]

Israeli Delegate Explains Security Proposal

*TA260207*4692 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0615 GMT 26 Feb 92*

[Report by Washington-based correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami]

[Text] Israeli delegation head Elyaqim Rubinstein informed the Palestinians last night that their autonomy model is totally unacceptable to Israel because it represents a working plan for the establishment of a Palestinian state. For their part, the Israelis presented a series of ideas for coexistence between Israel and the self-government during the interim period. The proposal contains a number of issues, such as internal security, health, economy, and so forth.

As could be expected at this emotion-laden stage of negotiations, last night's session was not particularly relaxed. Harsh observations were made by Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi, the Palestinian delegation head, who asserted that the Israeli rejection of the Palestinian plan really means a rejection of the Palestinian right to recognition. Rubinstein calmed him, saying that everything that is being said and done is designed to promote the chances of the negotiations and that Israel does not mean to offend. In addition, the Palestinians presented the Israelis with a document listing their allegations regarding the violation of human rights and of the Geneva Conventions in the territories.

Certain progress was noted in the talks with the Jordanians. Today the two sides will attempt to set up subcommittees that will hold detailed discussions of specialized issues, such as water, border adjustments, and others. [Writing on page 1 of Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 26 February, Washington-based correspondent Dan Avidan adds that "the establishment of subcommittees was an Israeli idea embraced by the Jordanians. The latter demanded, however, that a central committee be established whose first and foremost task would be the search of ways toward an understanding on the interpretation of Resolution 242 in the sense of territories for peace.]

["The Jordanians believe that before the Israeli Government embraces this principle, which derives from Resolution 242, no progress can be achieved on other issues due to be discussed in other committees and in the political negotiations held in parallel with the committees' work. The Israelis demanded that the committee debating Resolution 242 also discuss additional political aspects, probably questions bearing on the substance of future peace relations. The Jordanians suggested extending the deadline of the current round of talks from 4 to 11 March. The Israeli side was disinclined to accept the suggestion, but promised to consult the government."]

No progress whatsoever was made in the talks with the Lebanese and the Syrians, as we learn from the remarks of Yosi Ben-Aharon, head of the Israeli delegation:

[Begin recording] [Ben-Aharon] It is indeed hard to say that progress has been made. The reason for this is the Syrian stand, because our side has been exploring every possibility to find common grounds. Today we made a concrete attempt. We presented them with a paper detailing eight points of agreement on the most fundamental issues, the lowest common denominator. Our paper was based on a proposal they themselves presented to us in the last round of talks. The Syrian delegation head scanned the paper and returned it to us, rejecting its contents. We were very surprised, and we asked him to explain what point was unacceptable to him. To our surprise, he picked on a point saying that both sides have a right to security, saying that it is unacceptable to them. I told him: I met you halfway in this clause, because you had claimed that we wanted to use the issue of security to pose various demands to Syria, and I am telling you herewith that both sides need security; there will be no peace without that. He replied: No, I know what you mean when you speak of security; you want to use that term to justify the occupation. Well, this interpretation is really very convoluted. Anyway, I realized that he was completely unwilling to agree to any proposal of ours that can be defined as a positive step on our part, and I deplore this attitude.

[Ben-'Ami] You told us in the previous rounds that the process should not be rushed, because the negotiations are very difficult. And yet, do you not find this lack of progress discouraging and frustrating?

[Ben-Aharon] I believe the Syrian stand is determined by more than what goes on in the debate room; it is determined also by considerations pertaining to Syria's outlook on wider issues of strategy, its relationship with the superpowers, its sources of military and economic aid. They came to Washington because they harbor certain hopes; they expect that when a crisis occurs, the U.S. Administration, which they view as possibly the most sympathetic ever to the Arab cause, will intervene in their favor. [end recording]

Israeli Delegate on 'Restrained' Lebanese Approach

TA2502205692 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Excerpt] In Washington, the second round of peace talks was held today. Israel and Jordan agreed to set up joint subcommittees that would deal with defined issues such as borders, security, and economy. The subcommittees, the composition of which will be determined tomorrow, will begin operating parallel to the regular sessions of the delegations' plenum as early as the current round of talks. Our correspondent in Washington Ya'ir Stern reports:

The details are of lesser importance and progress was minimal. Surprisingly enough, however, despite the threats of explosions and crises, the peace talks continued in Washington. The second round of talks was held in Washington today and all the delegations attended the discussions as planned. All the delegations reported that the discussions were held in a businesslike atmosphere.

For example, there was some tension regarding the meeting with the Lebanese delegation after the fights in south Lebanon last week. I asked Yosi Hadas, the head of Israel's delegation for the talks with Lebanon, whether the head of the Lebanese delegation had any complaints regarding last week's IDF [Israel Defense Forces] raid on southern Lebanon.

[Begin Hadas recording] Naturally he made complaints, but he was very restrained. He understood—and this is my impression, because he did not say as much—that Israel did not wish to hurt Lebanon as such, but that it sought the sources of terrorism in Lebanon. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs

Envoys Hail U.S. Position on Loan Guarantees

NC2502165692 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—The Lebanese, Syrian, and Jordanian ambassadors in Cairo agree that the U.S. position linking loan guarantees to a halt in settlement-building is a "positive and constructive U.S. stand" and will encourage Arab countries to continue the peace negotiations and put an end to Israeli intransigence in these negotiations.

In a statement to MENA, Lebanese Ambassador 'Abd-al-Rahman al- Sulh said that the United States has proven that it is serious about the peace process. He said that the U.S. position is tantamount to a "warning and caution" to Israel to stop defying the international community, subscribe to Security Council resolutions and international legitimacy, and implement these resolutions, including Resolution 425 on withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Jordanian Ambassador Nabih al-Nimr praised the U.S. stand on the loan guarantees to Israel, calling it positive. He said that this position reflects U.S. sincerity and affirms its concern to make the peace process successful. He said: We have great hopes that this stand will be one of the effective means pursued by the United States to influence Israel and make it respond to peace requirements in implementation of the Security Council resolutions and in compliance with international legitimacy.

Syrian Ambassador 'Isa Darwish said that theoretically speaking, the U.S. stand has some positive aspects in Washington's move to pressure Israel vis-a-vis the loan guarantees to dissuade it from continuing the settlement drive in the occupied Arab territories. Practically speaking, he noted, this issue in itself shows Israel a great deal of partiality and appeasement at the expense of the basic principles of the peace process in the Middle East. In this respect, he wondered why the United States does not treat Israel the way any outlaw should be treated. He noted Israel's defiance of UN resolutions, its refusal to accept them as a partner in the peace process, and its refusal to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear arms. He asked: Does this not deserve U.S. sanctions and pressure, using the same standards applied to those who violated international legitimacy as Washington did with the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait?

The Syrian ambassador said that U.S. credibility is in danger, which could undermine the entire peace process, if Israel continues its aggression against Arab citizens in the occupied Arab territories and against neighboring Arab countries. He added that it would also endanger the new world order and create a situation similar to that of "the law of the jungle" where the strong can commit aggression against anyone without being deterred by laws.

Dr. 'Isa Darwish said that President George Bush openly declared to Congress in March 1990 that his country wants to implement international legitimacy to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and implement relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, especially Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. He added that all the U.S. letters of guarantees to the concerned countries revolved around the U.S. intention and determination to achieve lasting and just peace in the region.

The Syrian ambassador stressed that his country continues to be committed to peace and to believe that the just and comprehensive solution is the ideal one for the region's problems.

He said that Syria remains convinced that the United States can, in its capacity as the world's superpower, put a stop to the aggressor and exert every possible pressure that could lead to just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Darwish stressed that Arab countries have given every evidence and proof of their belief in and commitment to peace while Israel continues to challenge the international community, primarily the United States. He said that this became apparent in recent statements in which Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir underlined his commitment to establishing Greater Israel and not withdrawing from a single inch of the occupied Arab territories.

Arab League, GCC Sign Cooperation Memorandum

LD2102190392 Rabat MAP in English 1338 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Text] Cairo, Feb. 21 (MAP)—The Arab League and the Gulf Coopertion Council (GCC) have signed here a memorandum of understanding and cooperation destined to boost cooperation and coordination between their secretariates, reported the Gulf News Agency "GNA".

The memorandum also emphasised the necessity to adhere to rules and norms between Arab countries, particulary Arab League regulations and the agreement of joint defense and economic cooperation.

The Arab League and the GCC pledged to coordinate between the two organizations in various Arab and international spheres and provide support to joint action protects. [as received]

GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah al-Bisharah said the memorandum also focuses on the human rights issues.

For his part, Arab League Secretary General 'Abd-al-Majid stated that this a historic day between the League and the GCC to realize security and stability for the Arab world.

He added that the memorandum would put practical bases for the joint Arab cooperation and it is to serve as framework for future cooperation endeavors, pointing out that an annual meeting would be convened between the two sides.

ACO Ends Session, Issues Final Statement

NC2302195592 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1314 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—The Permanent Office of the Arab Cities Organization [ACO], after its meetings in Cairo today, condemned the latest Israeli aggression on southern Lebanon and affirmed its solidarity with the Lebanese people. It called for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 which stipulates Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The Permanent Office of the ACO issued its final statement and condemned the Zionist plans to build settlements in the occupied Arab territories and Judaize Jerusalem. They demanded that these settlements be stopped. It also affirmed its support for the Palestinian intifadah in the occupied Arab territories.

The office also affirmed its solidarity with the Libyan people in confronting all foreign dangers and condemned the threats directed at the Libyan Jamahiriyah. It

expressed its support for the measures and stands taken by the Arab League in this regard.

The Permanent Office of the ACO decided in its concluding statement, which was issued today, to send cables to regional and international bodies, organizations, and unions calling for the release of Kuwaiti POW's held in Iraq. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Denies Implicating Iran in Lockerbie Bombing

LD2502180192 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Official statement issued by the PLO; date not specified—read by announcer]

[Text] On 22 January 1992 [as heard] THE SUNDAY TIMES published statements attributed to PLO officials. The newspaper claimed that it [the PLO] has information according to which it accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of being responsible for the Lockerbie aviation incident and linked this information to the PLO.

The PLO emphasizes that it has no connection with the information concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran and referred to by the aforementioned newspaper. The PLO has complete appreciation for, fraternity with, and love for the Islamic Republic of Iran and its leaders.

Israeli radio was the first to broadcast this planted item, in its 1130 news bulletin on 23 January 1992.

Qaddumi Discusses PLO Participation in Talks

NC2602092592 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 11 Feb 92 p 3

[Interview with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, by Thuraya 'Asi in Larnaca during the Nonaligned Movement's foreign ministers conference; date not given]

[Text] ['Asi] Many comments have been made about your trip to Moscow to participate in the multilateral talks. How do you justify this policy?

[Qaddumi] It is a well-known fact that the PLO was not invited to the meetings and that Israel's objective is to bury the national identity of the Palestinian people and not to recognize the PLO. What we did then was to make the conference deal with a definite fait accompli, which is to accept the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, the cosponsors did not accept our participation.

['Asi] From the very beginning you had concerns about coordinating stands with the parties directly concerned with the peace process. In particular I am referring to the countries bordering Israel. After the Madrid conference you voiced your full coordination with them, specifically with Syria. Some observers say that your trip to Moscow weakened the Syrian and Lebanese stands. What do you think?

[Qaddumi] That explanation is totally false. Since the start of the talks we have objected to a two-track approach. In May I said that the two-track approach was an Israeli ploy which should not deceive us. We in the PLO oppose the two tracks. As I said earlier, convening this conference without the Palestinians means that the PLO will be termed an obstacle to peace. We have not, however, even been invited to participate in the conference. We did say that we were not invited and that the Madrid delegation—that is, the delegation representing the people from inside the occupied territories—was attending. In this way they want us to admit that the people inside the territories represent the people outside and that the refugee issue is humanitarian, not political, in nature.

This is why we tried to prove to the world that we really want peace, and that Israel opposes peace by not recognizing the national identity of the Palestinian people.

We did in fact coordinate stands with our brothers in the Arab countries, Syria, and Lebanon.

['Asi] Syria and Lebanon always try to prove that they support peace and the peace process, and they responded to the invitations to Madrid and Washington. They did, however, boycott the Moscow talks. This was not seen, however, as an attempt to hamper the peace process.

[Qaddumi] Syria and Lebanon are states which were invited to attend because they are states that could attend at any point in time. The PLO was not invited. We wanted to impose the presence of the PLO to force the conference to recognize our existence and identity. On 23 October of last year we coordinated stands in Damascus with the five confrontation states in the presence of a representative from the Gulf states; Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi prince and foreign minister; and another from the Maghreb states, Abdellatif Filali, Moroccan minister of state for foreign affairs and cooperation. We said very clearly that essential progress must be made in the bilateral talks. We asked these countries not to attend until some essential progress was made. To be honest, we also asked for coordination before the Marrakech conference. It seems, however, that there were some differences in Arab opinions because some states attended that meeting while others boycotted it.

The PLO was not invited to attend in the first place. We wanted to tell the whole world that the PLO represents the Palestinian people and that the PLO rejects the Madrid formula. This is what happened since we strongly presented this fact to international public opinion in Moscow.

['Asi] The Palestinians are trying to assert the Palestinian identity to the whole world. The PLO is trying to prove that it is the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This happened in Madrid and in Washington.

where the Palestinian delegation was left waiting in the corridors until it achieved the recognition of the independence of its delegation. Doesn't your trip to Moscow, which was carried out for basically the same purpose and where you were left waiting in the corridors once again, damage the morale of the Palestinian people who rejected the Moscow conference? They protested by going on strike in the Lebanese camps and in the occupied territories.

[Qaddumi] That is true, but there is no doubt that the peace conference in reality is a political battle that we are waging primarily against the United States, the only country in the world which does not recognize the PLO. U.S. recognition of the PLO is quite important to us. We are making all kinds of attempts to gain international support so that this will pressure the United States to recognize reality and not ignore the truth: that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Regardless of his efforts, Shamir cannot conceal this fact because our people inside and outside the occupied territories are one. Shamir must also admit that Jerusalem is an important issue and one that must be discussed.

['Asi] The United States has admitted the need to begin a dialogue with the PLO as a result of the Palestinian intifadah, which has not grown and developed but rather has diminished.

[Qaddumi] It has not diminished; it has merely continued. We never said that the intifadah would develop, as some believe, to reach the stage of using weapons. The intifadah is a method of democratic resistance and a people's intifadah inside the occupied territories against all the Israeli measures, or rather against the Israeli presence that occupies our land. The intifadah is continuing and is attaining one accomplishment after another.

['Asi] Some people say that by being excluded from the follow-up committees and by the participation of other Arabs in the talks your cause has been somewhat liquidated. How, in your opinion, would this reflect on the bilateral talks and your participation with Jordan in a joint delegation?

[Qaddumi] The Palestinian cause has not been liquidated whatsoever. The key to the issue of war or peace in the Middle East region rests with the settlement of the Palestine issue. The Palestine issue, which is represented by the Palestinian people and the PLO, which represents the Palestinian people, is the basis of this settlement. All the wars were fought and Arab territories in Syria, Sinai, and south Lebanon were occupied because of the Palestinian issue. This issue will remain the key issue in the Middle East. If the Palestinian issue is not solved, there will be no peace in the region. It is that simple.

['Asi] Can you tell us where the Palestinian issue is now, particularly as the negotiations ceiling reached in the course of the peace process was about autonomy?

[Qaddumi] That is not true. We entered the peace process because the peace conference was part of a comprehensive political settlement of all the problems and regional conflicts in the world, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is represented in the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights. The autonomy issue deals with a transition period on the basis of which the Palestinian people shall determine their future in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions, under the auspices of international legitimacy.

['Asi] How do you assess the results achieved by the Moscow negotiations? What do you expect from the committees formed during the meetings?

[Qaddumi] The steps to be taken by the conference will be either conciliatory or agreed upon by mutual consent by these countries. The Arab delegations during the conference have affirmed that if no vital progress is made during the bilateral negotiations they will not be prepared to take one single step toward the multilateral talks conference. This is a principled Arab stand serving the pan-Arab cause.

['Asi] What is your opinion of the George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, affair in France? Can we say that this was the first fruit of the results of the Moscow conference and a sign of the Israeli era?

[Qaddumi] The Habash case was an emergency. In our opinion, it was entirely created by the Zionist lobby in France, which exploited the upcoming elections to influence some politicians and put them in a delicate situation. An agreement was reached with the French Government to receive Dr. Habash for emergency treatment. The Zionist lobby, however, is opposed to noble humanitarian objectives.

People's Party Threatens To Pull Out of Talks

JN2502150192 Amman AL-RAY in Arabic 25 Feb 92 p 16

[Report by 'Awdah 'Awdah in Amman]

[Excerpt] Bashir al-Barghuthi, secretary general of the Palestinian People's Party [formerly the Palestinian Communist Party], has said that he "will withdraw his representatives from the peace negotiations (Dr. Ghassan al-Khatib and Dr. Samir 'Abdallah) if the demand for ending settlement activity, in all its forms, is dropped during the fourth round of talks in Washington and if the negotiators move on to another point before ending this activity."

In an exclusive statement made to AL-RAY upon his arrival in Amman from occupied Palestine yesterday, Mr. al-Barghuthi added: "Yes, we insist that our negotiators not move from the issue of settlements to some

other point until settlement activity is stopped and international guarantees for this are obtained." [passage omitted]

Baker Policy on Settlements 'Falls Short'

LD2502214992 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Station commentary]

[Text] Brothers, while welcoming the recent U.S. position, particularly the statements by Secretary of State James Baker, which view the settlements as an obstacle to the peace process, and his linking a stop to the settlements to U.S. loan guarantees, we consider this insufficient, for it is a partial position that falls short of attaining the comprehensive nature of a principled position based on legitimacy and the sovereignty of human rights. This is because the point is not a freezing of settlements in order to surmount the current process, but rather to totally transcend this and impose the law on which human rights are founded: the right of the Palestinian man, the Palestinian people, to recover the occupied land free from all that happened to it and all that was set up and created by occupation.

In fact, the settlement question is not an incidental one, nor is it being raised only while the peace process is advancing or while loans are being decided upon. It is a much more grave, more general, and more comprehensive question. The question of the settlements is as grave as the need to completely stop settlements in all the occupied territories as a first step and then, at a later stage, to remove them with all their tragic consequences.

In order to clarify the gravity of this matter we draw the attention of Mr. Baker and the U.S. Administration to the fact that East Jerusalem was, before the 1967 occupation, 7,000 donums [one donum equals 1,000 square meters] in size and is now, with the settlements, 72,000 donums in size. Furthermore, Jerusalem, as planned by Sharon and the Israeli studies prepared by the occupation authorities, will see its area become more than 26 percent of the West Bank, and its Jewish population will become one-fifth of the population. For this reason, settlements are an essential question. Furthermore, this could perhaps become the primary question after the Israeli withdrawal from all the territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. Completely stopping settlements now would open the way to shortening the time needed to attain the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the setting up of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Thus it becomes clear that the settlement question has two dimensions: One is related to principles, legality, and ethics, and the other is connected to realism and practicality. As a result, the United States, which is the sole superpower and which is brandishing the slogan of international legality and the precise and strict implementation of the rights of man and peoples, should take the initiative in defining a clear position on this question leading to a halt to settlements wherever they may be, thereby paving the way for dismantling and removing them and also to containing their danger to Jerusalem and Islamic and Christian sacred sites.

We know what the U.S. Administration is facing, and we know that the Jewish lobby might not permit official U.S. steps to be taken in a clear and precise manner based on international legality and human rights—and all the more because Israeli and U.S. elections are at hand. But what can be achieved is only what is sound. A new world is appearing, one which is being drawn up by the United States in the most appropriate historic occasions for this administration. Such a new order will not be useful and will not be realized with old facts and concepts. That which will come in the future and is based on international legality and human rights cannot be built contrary to these concepts. Likewise, a new order cannot be built with old means: intimidation by the Jewish lobby and thinking of Israel as a policeman for U.S. interests in the region. In the current era Israel is no longer good for this role. The region itself has become a region desiring peace and openness in the world, and it seeks to deal with the world on the basis of contributing to the building of a world in which stability and peace prevail based on free and equal relations.

Therefore, what is required from the United States is not to secure balances but to implement strict, clear, and just rules. The new world cannot be realized by placing it on a scale and having it collapse when the scale jiggles.

Editorial—No Difference Between Labor, Likud

TA2502165892 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in Arabic 22 Feb 92 pp 1, 11

[Editorial: "Rabin Or Shamir: No Difference and No Advantage"]

[Text] Yitzhaq Rabin at last became the chairman of the Israeli Labor Party instead of Shim'on Peres, who became "the former chairman." Also at last, Yitzhaq Shamir remained the Israeli prime minister while preserving his position as leader of the Likud Party. In the upcoming election campaign Rabin and Shamir will compete for the post of Israeli prime minister. What will happen if one or the other wins this post?

The policy that Shamir is pursuing is very clear and unambiguous. He seeks "the land of Greater Israel" and wants Israeli settlements to overflow to the horizons. He will never agree to exchange land for peace. Instead, he wants "self-rule" to be a red herring, with the majority of Israelis applauding him.

As for Rabin, he told the French newspaper LE FIGARO that he will "halt" the construction of settlements in the occupied territories if he is elected prime minister on 23 June. Will he be able to do so? Or, rather, will he really try to stop settlement activity while being one of the prominent "hawks" in the Labor Party?

We believe that as long as the United States, the major and most important sponsor of the peace talks, does not adopt a serious position marked by effective credibility within the framework of international legitimacy, and as long as it does not stop employing a double standard, no progress will be achieved in those talks, which are supposed to lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The reason for this is that Israel continues to deny the Palestinians their legitimate rights, the most important of which are the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent state alongside Israel. It will continue to refuse to recognize these rights whether under a government led by the Likud or Labor, or under a coalition government formed by the two parties.

Discussions of Israeli affairs can be endless, especially under these difficult circumstances, but we do not see any possibility of reaching an understanding with the Israeli side amid the current changes. We should not pin our hopes on any outcome of the upcoming Israeli elections. What is required is real U.S. pressure and nothing else. That is a fact.

'Arafat Received by Sudan's al-Bashir in Khartoum

EA2502220092 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, chairman of the Revolution Command Council and the Council of Ministers, received Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat this morning at his office at Friendship Hall.

In statements after the meeting the Palestinian president said that he reviewed with Lt. Gen. 'Umar the Arab situations, especially those concerning the Palestinian issue,in addition to current international issues. He briefed Lt. Gen. 'Umar on the escalation of the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli enemy. President 'Arafat affirmed the importance of the [word indistinct] continuation of the struggle and Arab solidarity to face up to all the challenges that the Arab masses are facing.

He said that Arab disunity will result in the [new] world order acting at the expense of the Arab masses. He added that he discussed with Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir the Arab moves in the upcoming period to heal the rift in the Arab ranks, and he called on all Arab leaders to work for the interests of the Arab nation.

As for the talks on the Middle East currently taking place in Washington, President 'Arafat said that the Israeli enemy wants to buy time because the current Israeli Government is an interim government.

The Palestinian president presented to Lt. Gen. 'Umar congratulations on the occasion of the convening of the opening session of the Transitional National Assembly. He said: We consider it auspicious within the Arab parliamentary family.

Algeria

Boudiaf Says Army 'Does Not Want To Seize Power'

LD2502115492 Rabat MAP in Arabic 0930 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Rabat, 25 Feb (MAP)—Mohamed Boudiaf, chairman of the Algerian Higher State Council, has affirmed that the Algerian Army does not want to seize power and that "the Army command believes in the need to resume the democratic process and the democratic parties' carrying out of their roles within the framework of the law."

In an exclusive interview with the Moroccan newspaper AL-ITTIHAD AL-ICHTIRAKI, Chairman Boudiaf said there is a deep conviction that Algeria's future is tied to democracy, and that in the light of this fact "we will work to place the democratic train back on the rails." He added, however, that "we will not succumb to embezzlement or accept the slaughter of democracy in the name of democracy."

He pointed out that "the Army's intervention" to stop the electoral process "was not a normal event" but rather "was decided upon after extensive discussions and deliberations, at which it was concluded that the protection of true democracy lies in suspending the electoral process."

Boudiaf added: "Prior to the Army's intervention numerous voices representing important social and political forces rose up and called for such an intervention to save the country from the fate that would have befallen it had the bearded one reached power." In this context, Boudiaf said that those "bearded ones" had declared in their statements, speeches, books, and at their centers that democracy is a Western innovation and that it is an act of atheism and blasphemy.

He added, "Had we let the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] reach power, we would have entered an era of great sedition, during which Muslims' blood would be shed, their properties robbed, their sanctities desecrated, and their conditions at the level of communities, individuals, or countries worsened."

Chairman Boudiaf affirmed that when he agreed to assume responsibility he did not do so out of any lust for power or prestige, but rather to check the challenge and put out the fire of sedition which was threatening Algeria "and our region in the West, as well as in the East" [Tunisia and Morocco].

Boudiaf said that the FIS saw developments in Afghanistan as an example to emulate and that it would have split the country, as was the case in Afghanistan, into groups fighting and devouring each other. He added that the number of those who have fallen victims to the liquidation wars among the so-called mojahedin is far greater than the number of those killed resisting the Soviet invasion.

He added that Algeria rejects any solution of this kind or of the Khomeyni pattern. He said: We refuse that because it is remote from the character of true Islam, which we want to be open, contemporary, and unbigoted. He affirmed that Algeria will not accept the exploitation of religion—religion has been present in the country for 14 centuries—nor will it allow anyone to sow the seeds of division in Algerian society or in the Maghreb region.

"When we check this new fanatical wave," he said, "we are not saving our country alone from falling prey to the tragedies of sedition, but we are also protecting Tunisia and Morocco from certain perils."

Boudiaf said "the greater Maghreb has no interest in having within it an experiment which threatens to drive it back into the age of the great sedition that existed between Ali and Mua'wiyah, and our brothers in the Maghreb must understand that we are also defending the fate of the democratic experiment in their countries."

Chairman Boudiaf affirmed that the FLN [National Liberation Front] ceased to exist in 1962, remaining in nothing but name, which the successive rulers, while fighting for power, used as a placard to give themselves the legitimacy that they needed. He added that these rulers transformed the FLN into a one-party system which should suffer the same fate as the one-party systems that existed in Egypt and the USSR.

Referring to the first stage of Algeria's elections, Boudiaf said that the political parties failed during this stage because they could not mobilize the 8 million Algerians who refrained from taking part in the elections, and that the only party that had relative success was that of Hocine Ait Ahmed's FFS [Socialist Forces Front]. Boudiaf added that the latter had made a political blunder by adopting a stand of insisting on pursuing the electoral process and that by doing so it had ignored the political nature of the FIS, "which exploits religion for demogagic purposes."

He said that the elections that almost brought the FIS to power were "more a punishment of the FLN than support for the FIS' political program."

Higher State Council Examines Political Conditions

LD2502175192 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] The Higher State Council [HSC] met today under the chairmanship of Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf. During the meeting the HSC took appropriate measures to guarantee that the tasks previously entrusted to the Ministry of Human Rights will continue to be carried out until the national human rights monitor is installed.

The HSC also examined a number of matters relating to the implementation of the decree providing for the creation of the National Consultative Council [al-Majlis al-'Istishari al-Watani].

The HSC also gave precise intructions to the competent authorities to take all appropriate measures to put an end to the recent disturbances at some universities and to guarantee that classes are not interrupted and that examinations are held in normal conditions in accordance with the university authorities' schedules.

At the end of its session the HSC decided to create a special committee in charge of compiling an inventory of the real estate and movable property belonging to the state and which is currently in the possession of political organizations and associations. The committee is also in charge of examining the terms of the return of this property to the state.

Low-Income Program To Be Implemented 'Soon'

LD2602052392 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Report by correspondent Hamza Wahib]

[Text] The government will soon begin implementing the program for helping those on limited and small incomes, a program which includes aid worth 24 billion dinars in 1992, Harchaoui, the official in charge of the Trade Ministry's general directorate for competition and prices, tonight told a meeting of the teachers and students of the Higher National School for Administration and Management.

Harchaoui began his address by discussing the roots of our country's economic crisis. He pointed out that the price increases have created a certain tension within society. Harchaoui said that the problems which are causing the country to stagger can be overcome if we control social spending and combat squandering and if we improve the buying power of those on limited incomes.

As for the sector which will benefit from this financial aid, the official in charge of the general directorate for competition and prices said that there are approximately 4 million individuals, divided into three categories, who need financial aid: those who earn less than 7,000 dinars a month, the elderly, and the unemployed.

Trade Minister delegate Ahmed Foudil Bay and Algerian General Union of Workers members were supposed to meet, but the meeting was reduced to a meeting between the official in charge of the Trade Ministry's general directorate for competition and prices and the teachers and students of the Higher National School for Administration and Management.

The school's director general organized a series of economic and financial lectures which will last until 29 June.

Decision on Action Against FIS Possible 2 Mar

LD2402205692 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Concerning the urgent legal action initiated by the Interior Ministry seeking the suspension and dissolution of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], the general prosecutor of the Algiers judicial council has said that the extension given the defense will lapse the day after tomorrow, Wednesday, and the prosecution may issue its decision next Monday afternoon [2 March]. [passage omitted]

Guechi Offers To Mediate Between State, Islamists

LD2502201192 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Mr. Said Guechi, minister of employment and vocational training, emphasized today to APS that he will not make any personal initiatives to mediate between the government and the Islamic parties. If the Higher State Council and the government should, however, consider such mediation necessary to restore civil peace and stability, then for the sake of the national interest he will not be able to refuse to do this.

He added that his current priorities are finding solutions to the problems of unemployment, creating jobs, and vocational training—through the post with which he has been entrusted.

As for the reasons for choosing him for the new government, Mr. Guechi answered: I do not consider the duty entrusted to me to be a trap or a test of the efficiency of the Islamists in managing the huge employment portfolio. My appointment is really due to my expertise in management and my [history of] struggle, which were crucial in my being selected to manage this sector.

Disturbances Continue at Universities

LD2502233992 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] While calm has returned to Bab Ezzouar University, where activities resumed yesterday, tension is still high at the universities in Batna and Constantine due to the behavior of a group of students who are trying to disrupt the examinations under the pretext of safeguarding the people's choice.

Setif University has been closed for a week for the same reason. It is worth mentioning that Mr. Djillali Liabes, minister of universities and scientific research, two days ago called on the university administration to face up to the situation with determination. Mr. Djillali Liabes also hinted at the need to again examine the notion of protecting the campus, which is not violated only, he said, when security troops come onto the campus but also when students allow themselves to bring politics onto the campus and when they forcibly disrupt the activities of the university.

Blida University is reopening its gates tomorrow after they were closed for nearly a week due to the wave of student disturbances.

Attempt Made To Free FIS Member From Hospital

LD2502135892 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Today's issue of the ALGER-REPUBLICAIN newspaper reported that a group of Islamic fundamentalists attacked Algiers' Mustapha Pacha Hospital to free a member of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] Consultative Council who was receiving medical treatment. The source did not give the name of the FIS official.

ALGER-REPUBLICAIN added that the fundamentalists who carried out the attack cut the power supply, thereby endangering the lives of scores of patients.

Hospital Director Denies 'Terrorist' Attack

LD2502160392 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1200 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] News concerning an attack carried out during Sunday night against Algiers' Mustapha Pacha Hospital was published this morning by ALGER-REPUBLICAIN. One of the hospital's directors, Dr. Maled, says that this is not correct. There was no attack, and security at the hospital is readily maintained. Here is hospital director Dr. Maled:

[Begin Maled recording] There was a general power failure in the [words indistinct]. The measures taken—and they were taken immediately—were that the unit on guard duty intervened to activate the reserve generator. Sonelgas [national firm supplying electricity and gas] were urgently contacted through the emergency police. Sonelgas technicians arrived at 2320 and restored the normal electricity supply at 2330.

As for the news reported by certain newspapers, as far as we know there was no terrorist attack on the [words indistinct] center. As for victims, I think it is terrible that such news should be reported without being checked. I formally refute such a report, and I make it clear that there were no victims. [end recording]

Rally for Culture and Democracy Leader on Unrest

PM2502122492 Paris LE FIGARO in French 22-23 Feb 92 p 2

[Interview with Said Saadi, leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy, by Irina de Chikoff in Algiers; date not given]

[Text] Algiers—[De Chikoff] Can the challenge which the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] has tried to mount each Friday continue?

[Saadi] We must not have any illusions. We still face days, weeks, or perhaps even months of violence. Since its legalization the FIS has seized control of the day of prayer. Abassi Medani immediately issued his instructions to the grass roots through the mosques. Higher State Council Chairman Mohamed Boudiaf has clearly understood the strategic importance of the mosques. The battle is being fought around them. The FIS, which has been decapitated, has no other means of communication.

[De Chikoff] Do you not think that the FIS will be able to unleash a people's uprising?

[Saadi] The social discontent in Algeria was initially politically neutral. The Islamic movement took advantage of that general discontent, and the regime even encouraged the FIS' exploitation of the population's disarray. For the past 30 years the National Liberation Front has totally abandoned anything which did not help it control society. The Islamic movement filled that vacuum, but it did not succeed in establishing fundamentalism in the people's minds. For want of something better, the most underprivileged people clung to the FIS, but they did not adopt fundamentalism. It is not part of Algerian culture.

[De Chikoff] Are the young people who harrass the forces of order after Friday prayers indoctrinated to the extent of wishing to become "martyrs?"

[Saadi] Schools in Algeria were the FIS' antechamber. Islam was instilled in the children on the pretext of Arabicization. In fact they do not speak Arabic, but they have been indoctrinated by the FIS. If this process had not been halted the children who are now throwing stones could have become so fanatical as to aspire to martyrdom. Fortunately we have not reached that point.

[De Chikoff] The political class is strangely silent about this unrest....

[Saadi] It is up to the state and nobody else to maintain law and order. The state's laxness is one reason why the FIS has its present level of influence. The ministers in this country have always been content to be seen and to benefit from the privileges of their position, and the present ministers are continuing this attitude. They must all wake up to their responsibilities and shoulder their burdens. The democratic parties must not whip up tension but should rather seek to minimize the human and social costs that will have to be paid and which are already very high.

Boudiaf Appoints Envoys To Explain Developments

LD2602060692 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Higher State Council Chairman Mohamed Boudiaf has asked Mohamed Ali Haroun, a member of the Higher State Council, to visit Belgium, Germany, and Spain, and former Minister Reda Malek to visit the United States and Canada as personal envoys of the Algerian head of state.

Their missions come within the framework of efforts which Chairman Boudiaf spoke of on numerous occasions to explain the recent developments in Algeria to the governments and publics of these countries. The missions are also a continuation of the similar mission entrusted to other officials to a number of Arab and European countries.

In the coming weeks missions will be sent to other countries which are friendly with Algeria.

Boudiaf Envoy Received at White House

LD2502202392 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Mr. Reda Malek, the personal envoy of Higher State Council Chairman Mohamed Boudiaf, has been received in the White House by senior U.S. officials. The conversation took place in the presence of Mr. Mohamed Yazid Zarhouni, Algerian ambassador to the United States, and this was an occasion to discuss developments in the situation in Algeria. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Mubarak Meets With NDP Secretariat, Committees

NC2302205792 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] President Husni Mubarak held a meeting this evening of the National Democratic Party's [NDP] General Secretariat. The meeting was attended by Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, the prime minister; Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur, People's Assembly speaker; Yusuf Wali, deputy prime minister; and the NDP secretary general. The meeting was also attended by the ministers of information, electricity, industry, petroleum, education, manpower, local administration, and People's Assembly and Consultative Council affairs. The meeting also included Kamal al-Shadhili, NDP organization secretary.

President Mubarak also held a meeting of the NDP Parliamentary Committees for the governorates of Asyut, Suhaj, Qina, and Aswan. The meeting was attended by the prime minister, a number of deputy prime ministers, the ministers, and members of the NDP General Secretariat.

Views Mediation on Lockerbie Issues

NC2402123692 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1111 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Cairo, 24 February (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has affirmed that Egypt rejects all forms of terrorism, and the use of violence to settle disputes between countries. On the dispute between Libya and the United States, France, and the UK, the president said that Egyptian contacts and efforts are continuing to reach a solution that will satisfy all the parties.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, reporting on the president's meeting with the members of the National Democratic Party's [NDP] General Secretariat last night, said that the president explained the efforts Egypt has been making since the crisis erupted to avoid a confrontation and the use of military force. He said Egypt has urged dialogue in an attempt to bring the various views closer, and to apply the rules of international legitimacy in resolving the crisis.

Al-Sharif said that President Mubarak will discuss the issue during his meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand in Paris on Wednesday [26 February].

Safwat al-Sharif said that President Mubarak expounded on the country's foreign policy; inter-Arab relations; and current efforts to bring peace to the region, for the good of its countries and to attain legitimate Arab rights. He pointed out that world public opinion supports the just Arab cause.

The information minister added that President Mubarak spoke of the new world order, which has made it necessary for all countries to reassess their policies.

President Mubarak said: We in Egypt are reassessing our policy in a way that will maintain our capabilities and our political, economic, and cultural importance on the world scene. We must possess the ability to handle new facts with understanding and a sound perspective, and we must deal with the world while preserving our independent decisionmaking, the nation's dignity and sovereignty, and the people's supreme interests.

Safwat al-Sharif said President Mubarak noted that Egypt's foreign policy and international stature are reflected in its domestic economic, social, and cultural policies. President Mubarak said that no country—big or small—can live isolated from the rest of the world, and that foreign and domestic political and economic issues are intermingled.

On attempts to undermine Egypt's stability and the infiltration of terrorists, the president said that the Egyptian people are moderate, and will not allow extremism to affect them. He declared: We will sever the hand of anyone who tries to export extremist ideas to us, in order to keep our people free of this disease and to keep them capable, strong, and united. Our people are an asset of the Arab nation, which has confidence in Egypt's sons.

President Mubarak noted that the security forces' vigilance protects society and stability. He said that a stable Egypt means a stable region.

On reports of corruption, carried in some opposition newspapers, President Mubarak asserted that Egypt does not cover up for any corruption or deviant behavior. He said: We have no fear about anything being published, and do not hesitate to adopt the necessary measures where appropriate.

He explained that the government has referred all corruption cases to the General Prosecutor's Office for investigation. He noted that Egypt is a state of laws, which respects court rulings.

President Mubarak said that corruption, as a human failing, is a worldwide phenomenon; that there is no society of angels; and that crime and corruption have always existed. He pointed out, however, that in a democratic and free society, crime and corruption are not covered up or protected.

He declared: We are not afraid of freedom, which lights the way when it is objective and takes the form of sober and responsible dialogue.

The president called for avoiding sensationalism, or speaking about issues without proper knowledge of them. He stressed the need to rise above personal interests.

Mubarak Receives Tunisian Religion Secretary

NC2302153092 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1410 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Excerpts] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Ali Chabbi, Tunisian secretary of state for religious affairs, this afternoon at the Presidential Palace. The meeting was attended by Dr. 'Ali Mahjub, awqaf minister.

The Tunisian secretary conveyed to President Mubarak the greetings and salutations of the Tunisian president. He said that he listened to President Mubarak's sound directives and appropriate opinions, which serve Muslims and the whole Arab nation. [passage omitted]

On events in Algeria, the Tunisian minister said the situation, as President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali said from the beginning, goes back to Algeria's experience with struggle. This experience is sufficient to realize Algeria's strength, and will enable it to solve its problems in a way that serves the Algerian people and puts an end to extremism—which has nothing to do with Islam or politics.

He said that extremism is a marginal phenomenon destined to die out. History has taught us this. Extremism neither makes nor moves history in any way.

Awqaf Minister Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub said: We are happy with the meeting with President Mubarak today. The president was very interested in learning about events in the fraternal Arab Maghreb in general, and Tunisia in particular—especially since the president has strong and firm links with his brother, the Tunisian president. The Egyptian people also have entrenched historic and cultural ties to the Tunisian people. This is why the president was eager to hear about the situation in fraternal Tunisia, especially from the minister.

The awqaf minister added: The president issued directives on religious cooperation between Tunisia and Egypt, especially at the stage the Arab and Islamic world is currently going through, with the international changes we are witnessing. It is the duty of religious and ideological institutions to cooperate and join hands to highlight Islam's tolerance, and clarify the bright image of enlightened Islamic thinking.

He said there will be meetings with the Tunisian minister to set the appropriate bases for joint cooperation in this field, because we and our Tunisian brothers in the Arab Islamic world are responsible for clarifying the image of enlightened Islamic thinking before the whole world.

Al-Baz Urges 'Confronting Israel Positively'

NC2202132192 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1053 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Kuwait, 22 Feb (MENA)—Dr. 'Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for political affairs, has called for confronting Israel positively by participating in the peace talks and denying it the opportunity to foil the efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

In an interview with SAWT AL-KUWAIT newspaper, published today, al-Baz noted that the Israeli Government is facing intense external and internal pressure to take positive steps on the peace process. He said Israel is working to create tension, but the world has come to realize that its efforts will not hamper the Middle East peace process for a long time to come.

He noted that Israel's attacks on south Lebanon confirm it is not sincere about peace. [passage omitted]

Journalist Sees 'New Factors' in U.S. Position

NC2502211592 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1845 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Telephone interview with Mahmud 'Awad, deputy chief editor of AKHBAR AL-YAWM, by unidentified announcer on 25 February; from the "Talking Newspaper" program—recorded]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Announcer] The U.S. media say that Israel will only show it is serious about the peace process if it commits itself to halting the building of settlements. The White House maintains the same position. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker declared this position before Congress yesterday. What does this U.S. affirmation mean, given Israeli prevarication and stalling, particularly since the United States called for the fourth round of peace talks in Washington?

['Awad] To be fair to all parties, the U.S. Administration has added two completely new factors to its position. The first is publicity. When President Bush stood before journalists and photographers on 12 September and publicly complained about the Zionist lobby's pressure on him, it was the first time he declared this position in public. He made the ordinary U.S. citizen a party to the issue. He said something for the benefit of the U.S. citizen that shook U.S. public opinion for the first time;

it was not news to you and me, but the ordinary U.S. citizen is not aware of Western (?policy). Bush said that it is enough that U.S. taxpayers pay $1,000 in aid to every man, woman, and child in Israel every year. Israel did not like this publicity; it wants its dealings with America to take place behind closed doors. When U.S. citizens heard this figure, at a time when they were suffering from economic problems, they asked why and for what?

[Announcer] This is of new significance to Israel?

['Awad] This is one of two new factors that President Bush introduced. He introduced publicity to the battle. The other factor is political price. Israel has received well over $80 billion dollars from the United States since its inception. This has never happened in American relations with any other country. In the past, the United States helped Israel without exacting a political price. The new factor, which James Baker candidly declared, is that the United States now wants Israel to pay a political price: You want me to do you a favor, but I do not have to do it unless you comply with the goals of U.S. policy. I will not help you by granting the loan guarantees until you comply with the aims of U.S. policy in the region.

[Announcer] This is a very important stance.

['Awad] This is the second new factor in the U.S. stand. The two factors together give the feeling that there is seriousness in the U.S. stand, that Israel realizes for the first time in its relations with the United States. This stand is very disturbing to Israel.

[Announcer] This is an important factor.

['Awad] This is a basic factor, without which all that is happening is nonsense. What is disturbing Israel is that there is now a settlement of accounts [kashf hisab]. Israel previously had grown used to doing what it wanted without a statement of account. There is now [words indistinct] although the U.S. Administration is doing this in the year that Israel imagines President Bush to be in his weakest position, because he is entering an election campaign.

[Announcer] Exactly. Thank you.

Commentary Lauds Mubarak's 'Wise Policy'

NC2202204492 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "Egypt's Leadership and Its Positive Actions"]

[Excerpt] The second half of last year and the start of this year saw quick Egyptian action on the Arab, African, and European levels to repel any dangers that Egypt, the Arab region, or the African continent could face as a result of massive international changes in the past few months, most prominent of which was the collapse of the Soviet Union. This collapse turned the United States into the sole superpower. It is on this basis that the new world order is being shaped.

Egypt's leadership had to act quickly and effectively on all fronts to repel any dangers Egypt might face as a result of these changes, and also to ensure an effective role for itself in the regional, Arab, and African arenas and in the new world order. President Mubarak did not waste time, and embarked on a round of contacts and discussions with various leaders here and abroad to find a way to ensure Egypt's leading role in the region and to prepare for its role on the world stage, particularly as President Mubarak's policy is supported by the international community and was one of the main factors in calming tensions in the region, especially during the Gulf crisis.

World leaders respect and esteem President Mubarak and his wise policy, which was also a principal factor in convening the Madrid peace conference and the subsequent bilateral and multilateral talks. Egypt's political leadership has spared no effort to ensure the continuation of negotiations between Arabs and Israelis, on the basis that this is the only sure way to reach a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis. Egypt did so despite all of Israel's efforts to impede the peace process.

There is no need here to go into detail about the Israeli obstacles, because everyone knows Israel's stand rejecting peace and its consequences. The latest manifestation of this was the barbaric and savage attack on south Lebanon. This attack has now cast depressing clouds on the peace negotiations slated to start in two days in Washington. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir gave short shrift to appeals to exercise self-restraint, and came out yesterday to tell the whole world: We will not exercise self-restraint; we will do as we like.

Egypt denounced the new Israeli aggression against south Lebanon, during which Israeli forces crossed the security strip and occupied four Lebanese villages. Tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles took part in the operation under cover of heavy air and artillery bombardment. In its denunciation of these irresponsible Israeli acts, Egypt said this Israeli stand could undermine the peace negotiations.

This Israeli aggression followed a series of land and air attacks on Hizballah positions in Lebanon. One victim of these attacks was Hizballah leader 'Abbas al-Musawi, his wife, and his six-year-old son. This is in addition to the dozens of people killed and wounded, and the ruin and destruction caused by these practices.

Based on his wide knowledge of Israeli methods, and his firm conviction that Israel is seeking to undermine the peace negotiations by every means at its disposal, President Mubarak undertook a number of tours of the West, the Arab region, and Africa. These tours aimed to win support for continuing the negotiations. This in turn tightened the noose around Israel, prompting it to act in this barbaric and savage way against the Palestinian refugee camps in south Lebanon, and against Lebanon's

sovereignty and territorial integrity; and to practice state terrorism against innocent civilians. [passage omitted]

Newspapers Cited on Israeli Action, Peace Process

NC2202081992 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0435 GMT 22 Feb 92

[From the "Press Review" program]

[Text] In its editorial, headlined "Invasion is a Useless Crime," AL-JUMHURIYAH states that the new Israeli aggression against Lebanon casts intense doubt on the credibility of the peace process, which is due to resume in Washington on Monday. It asks: Must the negotiations be conducted amid the sounds of gunfire and explosions in southern Lebanon?

The paper refers to Israel's invasions of southern Lebanon, saying that this is the fourth. It notes that the Israeli escalation came in response to events, but that an extreme reaction could have dangerous consequences. The pretext of the 1982 invasion was the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in the British capital, suspicious both in its timing and method. This attempt led to a war which cost Israel greatly and hampered the peace process.

In its "Opinion" column, AL-AHRAM says that saving southern Lebanon requires the Lebanese Government's intervention and the Army's control over the area, plus the insistence of the Arab parties to the peace talks that Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon be a basic condition for a settlement.

Newspaper Discusses Libyan Dispute, Sanctions

NC2202094792 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0615 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] AL-AHRAM warns that the West's intention to punish Libya by military means has not faded, but has receded temporarily, focusing on an air embargo or the boycott of civil airlines dealing with Libya, a ban on the sale of arms to Libya, withdrawal of foreign experts, and the scaling down of diplomatic representation.

In today's editorial, the paper says that sanctions contained in a new Security Council resolution will not include a ban on Libyan oil exports, because this would harm buyers more than it would harm Libya.

The paper adds that the sanctions against Libya—should it fail to bow to a previous Security Council resolution demanding that it hand over two citizens accused of blowing up U.S. and French planes—have escalated. The matter will not end by simply imposing these sanctions, but could intensify, taking on different forms until Libya submits. This is a gradual means of pressure, and a military option cannot be ruled out.

The paper emphasizes that the purpose of escalating the campaign against Libya is to deliver a message to the public in the United States, Britain, and France that the governments concerned will not forget about Libyan terrorism until the accused have been handed over—capitalizing on the humanitarian aspect of this issue as best they can. This, the paper says, coincides with election campaigns in the United States and Britain, and campaigns in France and elsewhere in Europe against Arab migrants—campaigns, the paper notes, which aim to show that there is a clear link between Arabs and terrorism, and which cite Libya as an example and model.

The paper states that the issue of the two Libyan men is not expected to end—even if Libya turns them over—because their subsequent trial would be another scenario to denounce and try the Arab terrorist mentality, which is what they seek to have the ordinary people believe for years to come.

Shamir, the paper says, has started to fan the fire, speaking after the Israeli-Lebanese border incidents of the need to continue the trial of what he termed Arab terrorism.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Discusses Lockerbie Affair

LD2502213192 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tripoli, 25 Feb (JANA)—The French publication LE FIGARO has published an interview with the brother leader of the revolution. The interview was conducted by the leader of the French journalists' trade union, who is a member of the paper's board of management.

The brother leader stressed in the interview that it is necessary to put the two suspects in the Pan Am affair on trial, because their continued detention without justifications violates their human rights. I join the relatives of the Lockerbie victims in stressing the need to find out the truth, and not exploit the blood of the innocent victims for political purposes. He added: We are surprised that the subject has been raised now that Iraq has been destroyed.

The brother leader announced that this has placed a question mark over the affair, and said: We find it strange that the United States and Britain do not feel ashamed in front of Libya, 80 of whose sons—including Hana' [Qadhdhafi's adopted daughter]—they killed in the recent past.

The brother leader of the revolution expressed extreme dismay over the infant victims in Libya. He said that it is similar to the case of France, which killed 1.5 million Algerians, but eventually recognized Algeria as an independent state; despite the fact that they had killed Algerians because they said no. He said that it is also similar to the very shameful record of Italian colonialism in Libya, which employed expulsions, hangings, and collective annihilation.

The brother leader of the revolution said that he expected them to be very sensitive and ashamed before Libya regarding what they did to its people, and that public opinion reflects a new thinking, which deprives the United States of its accomplishments in Kuwait. Its goal is the destruction of all developed Arab countries with an industrial, agricultural, and educational foundation. He explained that this conforms with the view of the Iraqis, who told us that Kuwait was only an excuse, and that our turn will be next.

The brother leader said that the liberation of Kuwait revealed the existence of a plan, put on the list after the other. Libya has supported international legitimacy, opposed Islamic extremism, and is an adversary to communism in the Arab homeland and throughout the world; hence, what are the reasons for this change toward Libya?

The brother leader of the revolution spoke about the popular authority which is being practiced by the masses in Libya. He said that Libya is a state which has abolished the army and the police, and established [word indistinct] democracy. It submitted very important proposals concerning disarmament; the inspection and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction; and solutions to the outstanding problems of the environment and combating disease.

He said his view is that the world had begun to shift toward this analysis; but the opposite happened, and Libya became the victim of the terrorist policy being practiced by these states, and this attitude in itself is terrorism. The Libyan people have been under threat for many years. All political and legal analysts in the world consider the current threat of economic and military actions to be one of the gravest forms of terrorism. He emphasized that terrorism is not just bombings; state terrorism is more dangerous.

Regarding France, the brother leader said that it seems that France is a state which does not know its interests or how to serve them; that French policy is totally contrary to its interests; and that the sole losers as a result of this are the French people. He pointed to the losses suffered by France in its relations with Libya and the benefits reaped for years by France's competitors; while France lost its interests in Libya for very trivial considerations, such as the tribal situation in Chad and their infighting over power. He said that France squandered the effort we made for serious cooperation between Western Europe and the Arab Maghreb, of which Libya is an important political and economic member.

The brother leader said that the Lockerbie affair is an artificial [mufta'alah] one, that the Libyan people are innocent, and that the affair is merely a fabrication of lying spies. The brother leader made clear that this is not the first time that spies had lied about Libya. They told Reagan that Libya sent a team to assassinate him, and it turned out that they were laughing at him, and that this was a slander against Libya.

He said he believes that this strange file which they have taken out is the same as the American raid, and this is the same as the conflict in Lebanon, the Gulf war, the shooting down of the Iranian plane, America's destruction of the Iranian oil refinery, the hostages, and Habre and the war in Chad. In other words, this is a strange file to bring up. Even the Soviet Union's file no longer exists. The war in Chad is over and Thatcher and Reagan no longer exist; so this file cannot remain between us, because it is a strange file that resembles the people of the cave mentioned in the holy books.

Further al-Qadhdhafi Comments

PM2502152092 Paris LE FIGARO in French 24 Feb 92 p 6

[Report on a conversation with Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi by Pierre Darcourt at an unspecified location near Tripoli; date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The colonel, wearing a brown fez and draped in a sumptuous black wool robe, greeted us and sat down. His entourage has changed. 'Abdallah al-Sanusi, his brother-in-law and former number two in the intelligence services, implicated by Judge Bruguiere in the downing of the UTA DC-10—who is usually present at all times—is no longer there. He is apparently under house arrest. Colonels Sa'id and Masu'd, pillars of the secret services—also usually present—were also absent.

Al-Qadhdhafi immediately warned us: "This is not an interview, just a conversation."

In fact, it was almost a monologue in which the Libyan leader analyzed, in a detached tone, the crisis the Jamahiriyah is experiencing. With regard to the Lockerbie and DC-10 cases, he carefully dissociated himself from them. "Libya is a sovereign state in which the government is in the people's hands." He is merely the "thinker"—a term which he now seems to prefer to "guide."

"We are the first to want the whole truth revealed, and do not wish to see the blood of the victims used for political purposes. We are surprised to see this matter being raised after Iraq's complete destruction. We protested and proclaimed our sincerity. But we very quickly realized that, as in 1986, we were facing real state terrorism, and that the Americans would not hesitate to launch a large-scale military operation. The United States is now the world's main military power, and is no longer counterbalanced by anybody. An armed confrontation would crush us. We are aware of the danger. That is why we prefer to opt for conciliation and justice rather than defiance...."

Col. al-Qadhdhafi continued: "An investigation is being conducted. The Libyan state has appointed a rigorous examining magistrate. Libyan law condemns terrorism and makes provisions for punishment, ranging from

imprisonment to capital punishment. I am firmly convinced that we are not involved. But the investigation will be carried through to the end...."

But, the Libyan head of state added: "What we have difficulty in understanding, after the terrible punishment inflicted on Iraq, is why this matter, which strikes me as over and done with, should not be linked with all the monstrous acts of terrorism which have shocked international opinion. Let us list the most serious ones together: The Korean plane downed by the Soviets, the Iranian plane destroyed by the Americans in the Gulf, the Libyan civil airliner which was downed by the Israelis, the American hostages in Tehran, the attacks on the U.S. embassy and the Marine barracks in Beirut, the explosion of the Drakkar building where French paratroopers were stationed, and the execution of the French ambassador. Countries other than ours—other foreign services—were responsible for those murderous actions. Nobody is talking about them any longer. That chapter has been closed."

Mubarak's Warnings

The fact remains that the security measures taken to protect the "guide," and the secrecy which surrounds his movements, show that the Libyan leader has taken very seriously the warnings given by Egyptian President Mubarak about the reality of the U.S. threat and George Bush's determination.

Al-Qadhdhafi is trying to bring his country out of a worrying diplomatic isolation. He has changed his tone and adopted a different course. There are no more invectives or provocations.

Archbishop Edmond Farhat, the Holy See's ambassador to the Maghreb, had a lengthy meeting with the colonel, who handed him the file containing the Libyan defense to be "conveyed to the holy father in Rome."

The Libyan diplomats with whom we met are warning the Western countries:

"The elimination of Col. al-Qadhdhafi is likely to destabilize the whole of North Africa. Al-Qadhdhafi, who dealt a heavy blow to the Islamic fundamentalists in our country, is one of the strongest ramparts against the spread of religious fanaticism. Sudan's fundamentalist government has strengthened its ties with Iran, and is supporting fundamentalists in Morocco and Tunisia. In Algeria, confrontation is inevitable. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's elimination would plunge Libya into chaos and tribal struggles."

These diplomats are appalled by the international consensus which was expressed by the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 731, the first stage in an escalation toward a total economic and air embargo. The government is preparing for that. Over the past six months, it has virtually doubled its imports of spare parts, and has built up large food stocks.

For two months, Colonel Yusuf al-Dibri has had the mission of "restructuring the intelligence services, cleaning them up, and punishing violations."

These services, which were organized and trained by the KGB, had hitherto been headed by police officers and commissioners.

Col. al-Dibri, a former "free officer" of the 1 September 1969 revolution, is a Nubian from a southern tribe. He is a soldier—better known as a writer—who has never been involved in the murder of opponents or acts of terrorism which have marked the 23 years of al-Qadhdhafi's rule.

He received us in one of his headquarters—an ordinary building undergoing restoration, close to the sea front. The colonel, wearing a gray flannel suit and a black silk necktie, smiled broadly and smoked Rothmans cigarettes. He did not seem pessimistic.

"We know that the CIA and the British carried out a colossal task. They recovered 90 percent of the debris from the Lockerbie plane, and fully reconstructed the plane. They even located precisely where the bomb was placed. They are excellent technicians. We have our own methods of investigation, which are less scientific. But we differ on the identity of those responsible. If we are forced to do so, we could supply the names of those really responsible and the people behind them.... But the consequences of that could be dramatic."

Is that a reference to Syria and Iran?

Col. al-Dibri's reply: "No comment."

PRC Chemical Industry Minister Arrives 25 Feb

LD2502153592 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1430 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tripoli, 25 Feb (JANA)—This morning in Tripoli, the brother secretary of the People's Committee for Strategic Industries met with Gu Xiulian, PRC chemical industry minister, who is currently visiting the Great Jamahiriyah to participate in the fourth session of the Libyan Arab-Chinese Joint Committee.

During the meeting, they discussed relations between the Great Jamahiriyah and the PRC, including ways of consolidating and developing these relations in various fields.

Libyan-Chinese Committee Convenes

LD2602071992 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1510 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tripoli, 25 Feb (JANA)—The fourth session of the Libyan Arab-Chinese Joint Committee convened at Tripoli's Al-Mahari Hotel this morning. The Committee aims to support bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries in various fields. The opening session was attended by the secretary of the Libyan People's Committee for Strategic Industries; Gu Xiulian, PRC

chemical industry minister; as well as by a number of techicians and experts on both sides.

The brother secretary of the People's Committee for Strategic Industries opened his speech by welcoming the chairwoman and members of the Chinese delegation to the Joint Committee. He said that the session aims to consolidate friendly relations between the two countries. He stressed the Jamahiriyah's eagerness to develop bilateral cooperation with the PRC. He stressed the importance of cooperation in various fields, and of increasing the volume of trade between the Jamahiriyah and the PRC "in the interest of both friendly peoples."

The PRC chemical industry minister also made a speech, in which she lauded friendship and cooperation between the great Jamahiriyah and the PRC. She stressed her country's eagerness to develop cooperation with the great Jamahiriyah, and explained that the committee session stems from the PRC's eagerness to support cooperation and trade with the great Jamahiriyah in various fields. She concluded by expressing the hope that the proceedings would succeed in achieving (?positive) results contributing to the consolidation of relations between the two countries.

Participating in the fourth session of the Libyan Arab-Chinese Joint Committee were several experts and specialists from various sectors in both countries. Four committees were established: the Committee on Economic Cooperation; the Committee on Trade Exchange and Banking Cooperation; the Committee on Technical Sciences; and a fourth committee, which examines bilateral cooperation in the fields of teaching, information, culture, and Jamahiri sports.

Sudan

SPLA Official Denies Secret Talks With Khartoum

AB2502212092 London BBC World Service in English 1515 GMT 25 Feb 92

[From the "Focus on Africa" program; interview with Richard Mula, London spokesman for the John Garang faction of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, SPLA, by correspondent Josephine Hazely; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] Accusations and counteraccusations are flying around between the two wings of Sudan's rebel SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army], which split last August. Each side is accusing the other of holding secret talks with the Khartoum government. Two weeks ago the breakaway Lam Akol faction admitted that there had been a meeting in Frankfurt to discuss a cease-fire and the issue of federation between north and south, and yesterday the Lam Akol faction itself accused John Garang's wing, the SPLA, of holding talks with the Sudanese Government. Josephine Hazely asked John Garang's London spokesman, Richard Mula, if the alleged secret talks had in fact taken place:

[Begin recording] [Mula] No, that is not the case! Where did we have the talks and when? Why do they not tell us when we held the talks and where?

[Hazely] They said you held the talks in London.

[Mula] No, we never held any talks with the Sudanese Government. We are not having talks with the Sudanese Government at all.

[Hazely] But they have given a detailed, you know, account of the talks and the people who were there. They said, in fact, some three or four of your commanders were there. There is a Lieutenant Commander Denga Lore, there is another one, Tahea Biyor, and the like who were present at this meeting which they called a secret meeting.

[Mula] In the first place, the titles of the people are wrong. Biyor is not a lieutenant commander; he is a full commander. Denga Lore is a full commander. It is only Nial who is an alternate commander, and these people have never met the Sudan commander anywhere in London. And Biyor himself is still here. I can bring him to testify to you that he has never met the Sudanese Government.

[Hazely] I mean, they also go on to say that you have put some proposals to the government. I mean it is quite detailed here. They said they have asked for immediate cease-fire, you have asked for some form of interim arrangement in the war zone. You know, you have come up with the commitment to settle the dispute peacefully. I mean, you know, this is quite detailed.

[Mula] But why are the detailed arrangements similar to those of Lam Akol's faction when they met in Frankfurt? When they met in Frankfurt they were discussing the same issues. Why is it that the details were brought up by Lam Akol himself? Is he not just trying to confuse the situation because they had a secret agreement in Frankfurt? This is a total confusion. It is a lie, it unfounded, it is baseless. We have not talked with the government, we have never talked with the government, and we have never made any of these proposals.

[Hazely] Are you not vehemently denying it all because you yourself are embarrassed because it goes contrary to all your pronouncements?

[Mula] Why, why, why be embarrassed? We are a confident movement. If we have any talks to conduct with the Sudan Government we will do it in public. We will never do it in secret. Last year, when we agreed to go to Abuja, we were ready to go in public. Why should we be secret?

[Hazely] But are you saying categorically that you have no plans whatsoever to talk to the government?

[Mula] Well, I am not saying that. I am saying if there are talks to be done publicly as the one which was arranged in Abuja, yes, we will go and talk, but not secretly. It has to be public.

[Hazely] Are you planning any talks with the government?

[Mula] We are not planning any talks. Since the Abuja talks were called off by the Sudanese Government we are not planning any talks. It is the Sudanese Government, whether they want to talk or not; it is up to them to come back to us.

[Hazely] Perhaps he [Garang] sent these commanders to come and talk to the Sudanese Government because he has come to realize that he will never rule the whole of Sudan.

[Mula] How could he send these commanders to come and talk with Sudanese Government without us? We are in London here, we are the ones who know what exactly is...

[Hazely, interrupting] Perhaps because he does not want you to know. *I mean, after all*, you are only a press officer.

[Mula] Well, not yet a press officer. I have been taking part in many of the negotiations. I have been to Atlanta. I have been to Lagos to prepare for the Abuja talks. I was one of the delegates to go to Abuja for the talks. I am not just a mere press officer. I am a chief negotiator in all that is going around, so I would have known. [end recording]

Kuwait

Minister Outlines Foreign Policy Principles

LD2502090992 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1325 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 24 Feb (KUNA)—Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said here this morning that Kuwait's foreign policy will start with three fundamental principles based on its position as an Arab and international member. It will also be based on considerations resulting from its subjection to an aggressive invasion.

Shaykh al-Salim noted at a news conference that he held on the occasion of National Day and the liberation anniversary, in which Ministers of Public Health 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Fawzan and Petroleum Minister Hamud 'Abdallah al-Ruqba took part, that Kuwait, as a member of the Arab League, will contribute as much as it can to strengthening and consolidating the league's charter. It will also contribute to reviving the Arab world in order to achieve the aspirations of Arab nations. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah mentioned that Kuwait has a role in and commitments to international institutions which it will not abandon. He pointed out that a meeting will be held between the EC and the Gulf Cooperation Council in Kuwait in May under Kuwait's chairmanship to consolidate the relationship between the two sides.

He added that this conforms with the general framework of the new international policy and with the so-called new world order, in particular following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah also referred to the visit that Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nasir 'Abdallah al-Ridan is currently paying to the CIS countries. He said that this visit is to study the possibilities of establishing cooperation ties with these countries with the aim of concentrating on the principles of freedom and independence for the peoples of those republics.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah affirmed that "Kuwait's security is the basis for its foreign and domestic policies," adding that "in response to the Kuwaiti people's wishes in this regard, security agreements were signed with the United States and Britain and a similar agreement is being discussed with France."

He said that these agreements and the Arab agreement known as "the Damascus Declaration" which preceded them are based on three main points: the defense of Kuwait's sovereignty and security, the establishment of military cooperation between Kuwait's Army and those of the aforementioned countries, and economic cooperation with these countries.

He reiterated that these agreements are not directed against any specific country but rather are agreements intended to check threats and danger to Kuwait from any country with future ambitions on Kuwait. [passage omitted]

In reply to journalists' questions, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah denied that there is any intention of permitting the reopening of Sudan's consulate in Kuwait. He said: Perhaps some people will come to close it or to sort out some of their affairs here.

As for a reported massing of Iraqi forces on Kuwait's northern border, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said that that statement is "imprecise." He said, however, that we must not trust the Iraqi regime's intentions.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to the Damascus Declaration. He pointed out that the protocol of the agreement is being studied by a technical committee in order to have it submitted to the next meeting.

Regarding the process of setting the border between Kuwait and Iraq, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said that an agreement was reached in 1963 between the late amir of Kuwait, Shaykh Sabah al-Salim, when he was prime minister, and former Iraqi Prime Minister Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, which stipulates that the border should be drawn on the basis of the 1932 agreement. He said that Shaykh Sabah al-Salim raised the question of the 1963 agreement with al-Bakr after they both became heads of state, along with the need to implement it, but al-Bakr and his regime renounced the agreement.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah pointed out that after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the United Nations decided to set up a committee to delineate the border between the two countries on the basis of the 1932 agreement. He made it clear that Kuwait would be satisfied with the decisions of that committee.

As for the Iranian role in the security of the Gulf, he said that Iran is a neighboring Muslim country with an important geographic location, with which we had relations based on mutual respect and noninterference in each other's affairs, and with which we agreed that the security of the region concerns everyone. He emphasized that channels with Iran are open concerning the exchange of information and trade exchanges.

In regard to the stand of the Kuwaiti Government on the question of Palestinians who possess papers and who wish to leave the country, he said that the Kuwaiti Government does not object to the departure of any Palestinian wishing to leave with all his possessions. He affirmed that the Foreign Ministry is prepared to issue a document permitting those leaving to go to any destination willing to receive them.

In reply to the charge that the Foreign Ministry refuses to receive complaints from the embassies here about the problems of servants who work in Kuwait, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah denied that the Foreign Ministry refuses to accept any compiaint from embassies. He explained that

problems of servants do not only exist in Kuwait; this is a general problem in all countries. [passage omitted]

Kuwaiti Petroleum Minister Hamud al-Ruqba talked about the harm inflicted on Kuwait's oil installations by the Iraqi aggression. He explained that the Iraqis mined all of Kuwait's oil fields, or 1,000 oil wells. Over 800 were blown up.

Dr. al-Ruqba explained that these explosions led to the destruction of the oil wells. Oil leaked out of 727 and caught fire. Another 360 wells were destroyed. Oil did not leak out or catch fire from the latter wells.

Dr. al-Ruqba explained that 280 wells out 360 in the al-Wafrah field, which Kuwait jointly taps with Saudi Arabia, were blown up.

As for the damage caused to storage centers and refineries, the oil minister said that most of the 26 storage centers were completely destroyed and that the al-Shu'aybah oil refinery was totally destroyed. The centers at al-Ahmadi and the 'Abdallah terminal were damaged.

He added that half of the storage tanks were destroyed as well the pipes and the export terminals, and that the artificial islands were all completely destroyed.

Dr. al-Ruqba explained that those who blew up these installations were experts because the explosives were placed in sensitive and effective areas. He commented on Iraqi claims that Iraq did not blow up the the wells and that it was the allied forces who did this, saying if this were true it would have been more correct to bomb Iraq's oil wells. He also asked how planes could use mines to carry out bombing raids. [passage omitted]

Army General Denies Iraqi Troop Concentrations

LD2502201392 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1848 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Paris, 25 Feb (KUNA)—Staff Major General Jabir al-Khalid al-Sabah, deputy chief of the Army and armed forces general staff, has stated that recent reports on the presence of Iraqi military concentrations on Kuwait's borders are absolutely untrue. Staff Maj. Gen. Jabir al-Khalid, who was speaking to Radio Monte Carlo, added that Kuwait was currently studying the signing of a security agreement with France and that such an agreement would be similar to those recently signed with both the United States and Britain.

He further said that these agreements, in addition to the Damascus Declaration, were aimed at guaranteeing the security of Kuwait and strengthening military cooperation with these states in the interest of the Kuwaiti people.

Oman

Deputy Prime Minister Discusses Border Disputes

JN2502151692 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Excerpts] His Highness Fahd Bin-Mahmud Al Sa'id, deputy prime minister for legal affairs, has emphasized that the Sultanate, under His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, pursues a certain realistic policy in its relations with its neighbors. It does not consider geographic areas but rather the bonds that should link neighbors, on the one hand, and the peoples of the Gulf region on the other.

In a statement appearing in today's issue of the London-based AL-HAYAH, his highness said that Oman is ready to end the current procedures pertaining to the border with Yemen and is waiting for the Yemenis to decide their final position. His highness, who chairs the Omani side of the higher Omani-Emirian joint committee, denied that there is a border problem between the Sultanate and the United Arab Emirates. He said that what remains to be settled are some technical issues which should be resolved with each emirate separately. [passage omitted]

When asked about the Middle East peace talks, His Highness Fahd Bin-Mahmud Al Sa'id expressed the Sultanate's hope that the talks will succeed and that the Palestinian people will regain their rights inside the occupied territories so that they can live a secure and stable life and have restored to them the territories that would enable them to establish their independent state.

As for such regional issues as water and arms reduction, his highness said that he believes these issues follow in the wake of the rights of the Palestinian people. He emphasized that the Sultanate and the Gulf Cooperation Council states will continue to link the issues of a withdrawal and Palestinian rights with progress in regional issues such as water and arms reduction. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Amir Receives Algerian Foreign Minister

JN2302121392 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] Doha, 23 Feb (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, Qatari amir, has received an oral message from Mohamed Boudiaf, chairman of the Algerian Higher State Council.

The message was conveyed by Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi when his highness the Qatari amir received him this morning.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY has said that the message concerns the current events and developments in Algeria and bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting they discussed the situation in Algeria and in the region in general, current Arab issues, a number of regional and international issues, as well as means of bolstering bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Saudi Arabia

German Minister Invites Saudi Investment

LD2502112392 Hamburg DPA in German 0643 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Riyadh (DPA)—Federal Economics Minister Juergen Moellemann during his visit to the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh on Tuesday invited investment in the five new Federal laender. Moellemann said at the start of the tenth session of the German-Saudi Economic Commission that the Federal Republic is banking on an influx of private capital from home and abroad to build up the economy in eastern Germany. The setting up of Saudi companies and Saudi shareholdings are "welcome at any time," the minister said.

Moellemann also called for the general expansion of cooperation between Germany and Saudi Arabia, the Federal Republic's most important trading partner in the Arab world. He welcomed the fact that following a period of stagnation, trade is again showing an upward trend, with 1991 figures of Saudi goods worth 2.1 billion German marks [DM] and German exports worth over 4 billion DM. The reintensification of trade will also improve conditions for increased industrial cooperation.

The minister pointed out that Bonn, in the current new round of negotiations between the European Community and the six Arab Gulf monarchies, has worked for an improved offer to the Gulf Cooperation Council. This has increased chances for an early conclusion of a free trade agreement. Moellemann emphatically welcomed the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is participating in the international campaigns in support of the former USSR and East European states.

The three-day economic talks are being attended by government representatives and businessmen from the two countries. The German side is represented by Georg Gailus, secretary of state from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, and representatives of approximately 30 German firms. On the sidelines of the economic commission session, Moellemann is holding talks with members of the Saudi leadership.

United Arab Emirates

Al-Qadhdhafi's Son Ends Visit, Departs

JN2402145892 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1055 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 24 Feb (WAKH)—Sayf al-Islam, son of Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, left Abu Dhabi this afternoon following a several-day visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE].

Al-Qadhdhafi's son met with His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the UAE, and several high-ranking officials.

Republic of Yemen

'Source' Denies Jewish Citizens Expelled

PM2502165192 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Feb 92 p 1

[Lutfi Shatarah report: "Sanaa Denies Eviction of Its Jewish Citizens, Confirms Their Freedom To Travel"]

[Excerpt] Aden from Lutfi Shatarah, Sanaa, news agencies—A responsible source at the Yemeni Foreign Ministry yesterday denied a British SUNDAY TIMES report that Israel was preparing to airlift Yemeni Jews to Israel.

In a statement published in Sanaa, the Yemeni source said: We categorically deny the SUNDAY TIMES report about the expulsion of Jewish Yemeni citizens to Israel.

He added: "Yemeni citizens, including Jews, have the right to travel to any country except Israel. Yemeni nationals are not permitted to travel to Israel." [passage omitted]

Al-'Attar Appointed Deputy Prime Minister

JN2502164092 Baghdad INA in English 1350 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Sanaa, Feb. 25, INA—Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih issued a presidential decree yesterday, under which Dr Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar was appointed as deputy prime minister and chairman of the general investment body.

Dr al-'Attar had assumed the post of industry minister since the formation of Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas' government following the declaration of Yemeni unity in May 1990.

Negotiations Proposed With UN Over Resolutions

JN2602072692 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Text] Iraq has proposed negotiations with the United Nations over the implementation of some Security Council resolutions pertaining to the control of Iraqi facilities [not further identified]. In a letter to UN Secretary General Butrus Ghali yesterday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir proposed the formation of a working group, composed of experts from Iraq and from the UN Special Committee assigned to remove Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The purpose of the group will be to verify that Iraq neither produces nor receives such weapons.

The Iraqi minister said that Iraq can negotiate with the Security Council and with the special committee on the basis of respect for its sovereignty and the needs of pan-Arab security, free from any provocations, and without affecting Iraq's peaceful industrial capability, or even those aspects of its military industry not banned by the Security Council resolutions.

Saddam Meets Finance Minister, Bank Governor

JN2202192792 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1904 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn met today with Finance Minister Majid 'Abd-Ja'far, Central Bank Governor Tariq al-Takamji, and a number of specialists in financial affairs.

The meeting was attended by Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi, chief of the Presidential Office.

Saddam Orders Increase in Rations for Ramadan

JN2502114992 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] To mark the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan, leader President Saddam Husayn has ordered a rise in citizens' food rations as of March. According to leader President Saddam Husayn's order, an individual's ration of vegetable oil will be increased by 50 percent, to 375 gm from 250 gm. The individual's ration of tea will be increased by 25 percent, to 1.25 kg from 1 kg; and the tea ration by 50 percent, to 75 gm from 50 gm.

Oil Minister Comments on Recent OPEC Meeting

JN2202160092 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1415 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Feb (INA)—Oil Minister Usamah 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Hiti returned to Baghdad from the sixth meeting of the OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee, which concluded in Geneva on 15 February.

In a statement to INA, the minister said the meeting was particularly important in view of the fact that the oil market has witnessed critical confusion as a result of a drop in oil prices, an increase in supply, and a great rise in oil reserves.

The minister added that if all resolutions made at the meeting were respected, it will prevent a further drop in oil prices. He pointed out that this agreement will not lead to a price increase, because there are still plenty of oil reserves, and the agreement was the minimum to be done to ensure a drop in reserves in the world market.

The minister said the views expressed by the oil ministers at the end of their meeting in regard to the second quarter of this year were not accurate, as there will be instability in the oil market during that period. He pointed out that the agreement stipulates that OPEC's production ceiling should not exceed 22.982 million barrels for the second quarter of this year.

The oil minister stressed that Iraq had hoped there would be more understanding of the interests of OPEC producer countries as a whole, and that stronger measures would be taken to influence the oil market. He said: This desire was frustrated by certain OPEC members who put their individual interests before the interests of the members as a whole. This reflects a shortsightedness in both the short and long terms.

He said he hopes this system will be reconsidered next April.

Regarding Iraq's production potential and its ability to market its oil, Usamah 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Hiti said that if the unfair blockade against our people is lifted, Iraq has the ability to export more than 1.5 million barrels of crude oil per day. This will grow gradually to the point where Iraq is able to return to its previous capability in the second half of this year, the minister said.

Regarding the production ceiling, and the OPEC members' quotas in the event Iraq returns to the oil market with such a large capacity, the minister said: OPEC has agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting, immediately after Iraq begins to export its oil, to review the organization's production ceiling and the quotas in order to maintain the prices.

He added that the press release issued by the conference reaffirmed the commitment and loyalty of the member states to the July 1990 agreement, and that the conferees decided to adopt a control mechanism stipulated in that agreement, whereby the member states' production and export of crude oil will be controlled by two subcommittees.

Concluding his statement, the oil minister stressed the need for OPEC members to abide by the agreement, at least in order to prevent any further drop in oil prices. He stressed that what is important is not to reach decisions, but to abide by these decision, and then persistently work to remove the oil glut and raise the price to a reasonable level.

Iraqi Airways Demands Return of Planes From Iran

JN2202093592 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Feb (INA)—Nur-al-Din al-Safi, Iraqi Airways director general, has asked Iran to return the Iraqi civilian planes currently in Iranian territory to Iraqi Airways, because there are no legal grounds for holding them there.

In a statement to the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH published today, he added that Iraq deposited 27 civilian planes in Iranian territory after securing Iran's approval and with the prior knowledge of the United Nations, to protect them from the aggression.

The Iraqi Airways director general indicated that an Iraqi delegation which recently visited Iran affirmed the need to settle this issue and return the Iraqi planes. He noted, however, that the Iranian side is playing a game of procrastination and prevarication in this matter.

Al-Safi pointed out that Iran is trying to politicize the issue of the Iraqi planes, in violation of previous pledges it made in this regard, using flimsy excuses. Iran had promised to return the planes, he maintained, after a cease-fire went into effect.

The Iraqi Airways director general affirmed that the airline has sustained losses exceeding $100 million, as a result of the economic and air blockade imposed on Iraq, since air transport was halted on 15 January 1991; not to mention the technical damage caused by suspending routine maintenance and inspection operations that must be performed on its planes. Furthermore, he noted, the airline has continued to pay salaries and technical allowances to more than 4,000 employees.

Al-Safi added that the airline has requested permission to conduct 10 percent of its overall flight operations for training and maintenance purposes, to provide humanitarian services to official and foreign delegations coming to Baghdad, and to ensure travel for the sick and elderly due to the difficulties encountered along the road between Baghdad and Amman. He went on to say that Iraqi Airways's services are not confined exclusively to Iraqis. It also caters to foreigners, and provides transit between various world cities and capitals.

The Iraqi Airways director general maintained that reconstruction at aviation installations and airports began on 11 May 1991, with the removal of debris left by the enemy aerial bombardment, and also with the start of repairs on hangars—utilizing purely Iraqi efforts and expertise. We hope to accomplish this by year's end, he added. He maintained that Iraqi Airways resumed domestic flights from al-Basrah in mid-January, with three flights a day. Besides, he affirmed, the al-Muthanna Airport, which is a key installation in domestic air transport, has been reconstructed. We hope that we will be able to increase the number of flights to al-Basrah, he said. It will be possible to resume flights to Mosul as soon as the approval of the Sanctions Committee is obtained, he concluded.

SAIRI Leader Denies Plans To Form Government

NC2502184592 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Dispatch by unidentified correspondent in Riyadh]

[Text] My first meeting after arriving at Riyadh's Palace of Conferences yesterday was with Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI]. It was an important and informative meeting. We discussed very important issues connected with the progress of the Iraqi people's struggle to attain liberty and dignity, and to eliminate the black nightmare smothering our beloved Iraq.

His eminence commented on fabricated reports about an alleged agreement among the Iraqi opposition groups to form a national salvation committee and a nonpolitical [ghayr siyasiyah] government, to lead Iraq during the period immediately following the fall of the tyrant's regime.

His Eminence Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim said that the dissemination of such reports is premature, and aims to foil the Iraqi opposition's efforts to unite their ranks and find practical formulas to hasten the fall of the defeated regime.

Al-Hakim asserted that the Riyadh conference is merely a good step toward finding common ground among the opposition groups. He warned that the premature proclamation of impractical and false formulas harms the opposition, and lays a great responsibility on its shoulders in the eyes of Iraqi citizens. He noted that the opposition is indeed qualified to bear such a responsibility, but the objective circumstances permitting this have not yet matured. Ayatollah al-Hakim emphatically denied the rumors.

His Eminence Sayyid al-Hakim graciously cast light on another issue, saying that the defeated regime is planning a new aggression against our people in the south, in order to involve the remnants of the Iraqi Army in battles far from Baghdad and the tyrants' hiding places. The tyrant wants to make the world think that he can survive, and is still in control. Al-Hakim added that if such an aggression takes place, the world will have to shoulder its responsibilities. He urged all effective Iraqi forces and Arab and international forces to assist the Iraqi opposition, and back its attempt to pounce on the defeated tyrant's regime.

His Eminence Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim announced that the Iraqi Army and some Republican Guard officers support the wounded Iraqi people's struggle, and that they are waiting for the (?right) time to

support the rebellion in toppling the tyrant, and establishing a just society that will provide security for all its sons and social justice for all Iraqis.

His Eminence Sayyid al-Hakim praised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its sincere support for the Iraqi people's struggle, and its assistance to the Iraqi people for the sake of liberating Iraq from injustice, [word indistinct], and immoral rule. He also thanked the Kingdom for its aid to Iraqi refugees following the blessed uprising in Iraq.

As for my personal impression of the character of Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, it can be summarized in one sentence: He is a noble, Arab, Iraqi Muslim who is making sincere and honest efforts to unite all Iraqis against the common enemy, the regime of the tyrant, Saddam Husayn.

Views Saudi Meetings

PM2602095892 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Feb 92 p 5

[By 'Abdallah al-Haj: "Al-Hakim Tells AL-HAYAH: Iraqi Opposition Infiltrated Republican Guard Forces"]

[Text] Riyadh—Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has stated that he was happy to visit Saudi Arabia and meet with Saudi officials.

He told AL-HAYAH that "the real opposition is that exercised by the Iraqi people." He said that there was no barrier between the opposition at home and the opposition abroad. He underscored full coordination among the opposition factions, with the aim of overthrowing the Baghdad regime. He said that the opposition "has infiltrated the ranks of the Iraqi Republican Guard."

He recalled the events of last March, which "resulted in the death of over half a million people in southern, central, and northern Iraq; and the displacement of over 2.5 million Iraqis, who were forced to flee abroad out of fear of the regime's brutality. The regime used aircraft, artillery, and tanks to attack peaceful civilians."

He expressed the belief that "the Iraqi people are capable of toppling the Baghdad regime. The symbols of the regime are aware of this, so they are treating the people with increasing brutality. The regime is beginning to realize that it is in a difficult position in the face of the opposition."

He confirmed that the opposition "has succeeded in strengthening its links with large sectors of the Iraqi Army, and has even managed to infiltrate the ranks of the Republican Guard. It has also successfully rallied world support at the United Nations and in human rights organizations, which have passed resolutions in support of the Iraqi people." He also said that "there is understanding in such neighboring states as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, which support the wronged [Iraqi] people."

Al-Hakim denied that the opposition had foreign guarantees that President Saddam Husayn's regime would be overthrown. He emphasized that "our main reliance is on the Iraqi people at home and abroad." Underlining the importance of his visit to Saudi Arabia, he said that he was working for "regional cooperation and Islamic solidarity for the protection of the Muslim Iraqi people." He expected the visit to achieve positive results.

He arrived in Riyadh the day before yesterday at the head of a delegation of SAIRI members and officials of Islamic opposition movements.

Regime's Officers Reportedly Joining Rebels

NC2202175392 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] Iraqi opposition forces have called on the Armed Forces to join the rebel movement to topple Saddam Husayn and his unjust dictatorial regime.

According to special reports, Islamic groups have distributed leaflets in Baghdad, al-Basrah, Mosul, Karbala', and al-Najaf, calling on the military to be alert, and to join the people in the south against the tyrant Saddam.

The newspaper AL-SHAHID and the bulletin AL-FURAT—published by the Iraqi Islamic Action Organization—have been distributed in central, southern, and northern governorates.

The reports add that numerous military officers and other ranks have responded to these calls and contacted the Islamic movement groups, expressing their readiness to cooperate in any form and to provide assistance.

'Secret Plan' Reportedly Launched Against Saddam

PM2502151992 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Feb 92 pp 1, 4

["Implementation of Plan To Topple Saddam Regime Started"—AL-HAYAH headline]

[Text] London—AL-HAYAH has learned from U.S. and British defense sources, and Kurdish and Shiite opposition circles in Iraq, that the implementation of a secret plan to topple President Saddam Husayn's regime started at the beginning of February, and that specialized foreign experts and trainers have entered specific areas in Iraq to participate in implementing the plan.

The sources described the plan as the first of its kind in terms of integration, goals, and diversity of methods. They said that it is being conducted under a political decision adopted at the highest level in a number of coalition states—first and foremost the United States—in order to "put an end to Saddam Husayn."

They said that the plan includes the following main provisions:

1. Working to infiltrate the Iraqi regime from within—especially the Army and intelligence establishments—in

order to weaken and shake the regime's foundations, in the hope of finding a successor for Saddam from within the present ruling establishment, should it prove difficult to find a replacement enjoying sufficient power and consensus among opposition ranks.

2. Strengthening opposition forces, and their presence and influence in the regions in which these forces enjoy traditional widespread popular support. The same applies to the Kurdish forces in the North in their various wings and parties, in addition to the Shiite Islamic opposition in the South, and the other opposition groups: leftist, secular, and nationalist. This strengthening—according to the same sources—will be maintained politically, financially, and militarily. It includes deploying armed and well-equipped opposition cells in various Iraqi regions, whose tasks are to carry out sabotage operations, set up ambushes, and assassinate symbols of authority in their areas. The aim is to spread as much confusion as possible in the regime's ranks, raise the morale of the opposition's supporters, and encourage them to make a move and intensify the uprising.

3. Supporting secret operations against the regime by planting groups of experts, special forces, and agents from outside Iraq in various Iraqi regions to work with the opposition and provide it with expertise and training, and help enable it to implement the tasks assigned to it.

AL-HAYAH has learned that vanguard groups of foreign experts specializing in secret warfare methods, and trainers specializing in operating in desert and Arab areas—men fluent in the local language and capable of disguising themselves completely in local costume—have actually arrived in the areas specified for their tasks inside Iraq, and that they have begun to carry out their tasks in recent days.

The same sources pointed out that the implementation of a large-scale media and political campaign has started. Signs of this emerged in recent weeks in preparation for the anticipated escalation in the internal Iraqi situation. The aim is to arouse as much hostile feeling as possible against President Saddam and his regime in the world, including the Arab region. These signs include leaks of information and videotapes to Western media services, showing atrocities, torture, and executions carried out by pillars of the present regime against opposition members in the north and south.

The sources revealed that, where it is deployed, the Iraqi opposition managed to seize complete files and documents on the Iraqi security organs' practices. They include detailed information about names, figures, and dates of intelligence activities and torture, assassination, destruction, and mass execution operations carried out between 1985 and 1989.

The weight of these files is estimated at 30 to 40 tonnes. The opposition—in coordination with the foreign parties supporting it—are working to smuggle them out of Iraq in stages, in order to sort and classify them in preparation for publishing them internationally and using them as evidence against the Iraqi regime.

The sources pointed out that these files revealed a number of huge mass graves, in which the Iraqi security organs buried those who died as a result of torture or as a result of the bombing, annihilation, and mass murder operations carried out over past years in various Iraqi regions.

U.S. military experts say that the latest advanced electronic means, including satellites, are currently being used to locate these graves in preparation for getting to them and digging them up. Some of them believe that what will be uncovered could be equal to "the Nazis' atrocities" in Europe during World War II. They expect these graves to include 100,000 to 150,00 corpses in the south, and a similar number in northern Kurdish areas.

The sources link the plan to topple Saddam with the extensive efforts and moves being made at the political level to regroup opposition forces and crystallize their regional and international relations and alliances, and to provide them with the political umbrella necessary for their anticipated move, in order to topple the Iraqi regime and assume power in Baghdad.

Netanyahu Sees 'Auschwitz Borders' in U.S. Stand

TA2502204692 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] There is a growing fear in Jerusalem of an inevitable and unprecedented clash between the United States and Israel regarding the policy and ideology of the Israeli Government.

Binyamin Netanyahu, deputy minister at the Prime Minister's Office, told this news program this evening that the U.S. demand means returning Israel to the Auschwitz borders, as he put it, and we have to struggle against that, even if we have to waive the guarantees. Our political correspondent Gadi Sukenik spoke with Netanyahu about the choice the Americans are forcing on us: guarantees or settlements:

[Begin recording] [Netanyahu] I believe this is a political mistake that sabotages rather than advances the peace process. When the Arabs see the United States pressuring Israel on an issue that is the essence of the negotiations, they may sit back and say: We need do nothing; we need not make any concessions. This hurts the direct negotiations, thus pushing peace farther away rather then bringing it closer.

At the same time, it is a moral mistake. This position speaks to the millions of Jews who want to run for their lives from that volcano that used to be the USSR—those who want to come here—and says to them: You will stay there.

[Sukenik] Perhaps this is a moment of truth when he who pays wants to have a say. The Americans want to know where the money is going.

[Netanyahu] We have already pledged that not a single cent of the money we raise with the help of the guarantees will be allocated for construction in Judaea and Samaria. There is no reason not to repeat that formula. If, however, the issue of guarantees is meant to be used not just to prevent Jewish or Russian immigrants from settling in Judaea and Samaria, but to exclude us from there altogether, this is something no responsible country can accept.

[Sukenik] The economy and employment are not in great shape; the immigrants, it seems, do not want to come under current circumstances. What is going to happen? Can we live without the guarantees and only stand tall?

[Netanyahu] When they come and tell me: Look, I will strangle you this way—geographically—or that way—demographically—any country in its right mind would reject such pressure. I know our cause is just. I know from experience that it is possible to fight the United States when your cause is just. The American people are attentive when it comes to justice. You heard this in Congress today from various supporters of ours, and I have been hearing this from others as well. If need be, we will struggle over this. We certainly must not surrender, and we will not.

[Sukenik] Mr. Netanyahu, perhaps the current U.S. Administration is tired of the Shamir government and simply wants another one, led by Labor under Yitzhaq Rabin. That is what commentators there have been saying.

[Netanyahu] I hope that is not true. Perhaps someone in Washington entertains the illusion—though I find it hard to believe—that interference in Israel's internal affairs will serve one party or another. I must tell you that this nation reacts in just the opposite way. The reason for that is very simple: It spent nearly 2,000 years having its fate dictated by other nations. It established this state so that it and its leaders could determine its fate. This is what will happen this time. [end recording]

Arens: 'Least Convenient Time' To Leave Lebanon

TA2502210092 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2030 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens said this evening that the UN assistant secretary general's call on Israel to pull out of Lebanon was made at the least convenient time for the State of Israel. Arens, who held a meeting this evening with the UN envoy in charge of Lebanon, stressed that the northward movement of Hizballah terrorists from the villages of Kafra and Yatar is a major success for the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. This was reported by our correspondent Netan'el Semnick.

Welcomes Lebanese Move on Katyushas

TA2602083292 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0620 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Report on interview with Defense Minister Moshe Arens by army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe; at a meeting of IDF disabled "last night"—recorded]

[Excerpt] Defense Minister Moshe Arens came to the encounter with disabled IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers after a meeting with Assistant UN Secretary General Marrack Goulding.

[Begin recording] [Arens] Mr. Goulding arrived here from Lebanon. He has visited Beirut and southern Lebanon, as well as Kafra, the area in which the IDF operated [on 19 February]. As could be expected, we discussed the situation in south Lebanon.

[Menashe] After the meeting, Goulding said that Israel must implement the UN resolution and withdraw from the security zone.

[Arens] Well, we are used to hearing this message from Goulding, and I would not expect anything else. At the same time, I think he understands perfectly well that this is perhaps the least suitable and convenient time for suggesting such a thing to us. We have just been through a week of katyushas and we have just been through a year of increasingly bustling activities on the part of the terrorist organization of Hizballah, which were unhampered by either the Lebanese Army or UNIFIL [UN

Interim Force in Lebanon]. Therefore, we bear the responsibility for the security of our country and of the residents of northern Israel, and the security zone is an important component of our position on this issue.

[Menashe] Is it true that the Hizballah terrorists who had arrived in the south have returned to their original places in Beirut and al-Biqa', as Goulding told reporters?

[Arens] I myself heard it from him; also, we have bits and pieces of information that there is traffic in the right direction, namely, out. I cannot affirm that they have all left the area, but I am glad to note that the Lebanese administration and the Lebanese Army have issued the appropriate instructions, that they decided and managed to attain an agreement with all the protagonists banning any further firing of katyushas at Israel. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Moda'i Has 'Alternative Plan' if No Guarantees

TA2402165392 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] We have an alternative plan to the loan guarantees that has nothing to do with the Israeli economy, Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i told the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee. Moda'i declined to detail the plan. I do not want to give the Americans an excuse not to give us the loan guarantees. Moda'i said he reprimanded the governor of the Bank of Israel for discussing in public the importance of the loan guarantees for the economy.

Our Knesset correspondent Dov Gilhar reports:

Not giving us the guarantees will only harm immigrant absorption, Moda'i said this morning in the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee—this did not infuse optimism among the members. Moda'i explained Israel's situation in the world capital market. The importance of the loan guarantees has become so critical that the entire world is watching us, which has an influence on the stock market and the currency exchange rate. We have blown up the matter not for economic but for other reasons. The finance minister said he told the governor of the Bank of Israel this morning that he should not have spoken publicly about the importance of the loan guarantees even if he thought that they are so important. Moda'i announced that we have an alternative plan to the guarantees which has nothing to do with the Israeli economy, but declined to discuss it. I do not want to give the Americans an excuse to hold back the guarantees, he explained. The finance minister admitted that he is not sure that Israel will reach the sum the loan guarantees promise if it uses the alternative paths. Knesset Member David Zucker noted that in his view the government will not succeed in raising even half the amount of the loan guarantees. Moda'i replied: I was told you are prepared to swallow a hat if we receive more than half. Zucker responded: I will even swallow a baseball cap, if you are ready to swallow a clown's hat if we get less than that.

Frenkel Sees No Economic Obstacles to Guarantees

TA2402123692 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Professor Ya'aqov Frenkel, governor of the Bank of Israel, returned home last night from Washington, where he conferred with administration officials and discussed with them the loan guarantees. The governor believes there is no longer any economic obstacle to receiving the guarantees. Our economic affairs correspondent Menahem Friedman reports from the Bank of Israel, where Prof. Frenkel is holding a briefing:

Prof. Frenkel said here in Jerusalem that he will not discuss political issues at the briefing. He took care not to get involved in the political issues and concentrated only on economic aspects. He met with Baker and with Robert Zoellick, assistant secretary of state for economic affairs. From the meetings Frenkel received the impression that, from an economic viewpoint, the situation was good or even very good. The Americans even praised some of the economic steps implemented by Israel recently. There is, however, an element of risk for the U.S. Administration if it approves the loan guarantees, and therefore it would like to see structural reforms carried out in the Israeli economy.

We asked the governor if it is possible to say that there is no economic obstacle to receiving the guarantees.

[Begin Frenkel recording] In my view, we have started along a path on which, if we continue, there will be no economic obstacle to receiving the guarantees. The administration considered the meetings we held to be of the highest importance. I think the very fact that so much time was devoted to the meetings is an important signal. For example, Under Secretary of State Robert Zoellick met with us for over five hours in two meetings on one day. During those meetings a complete picture of the Israeli economy was presented. In my view, the correct picture we presented improved Under Secretary of State Zoellick's image of the economy. Simultaneously, a very positive report on Israel's economy was published. We also made an effort to pinpoint the sectors in which there is still need for economic reforms. [end recording]

There is in these remarks a very positive impression of the talks in Washington. The Americans still believe that far-reaching economic reforms must be made in Israel, especially in the structure of the economy, flexibility of the labor force, and so forth. Such reforms have already been raised in Israel many times and have still not been implemented.

Settlement To Be Broached Only After Autonomy

TA2502212992 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2100 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] In response to Secretary of State James Baker's statement that Israel will receive the loan guarantees only if it stops settlement activity, Cabinet Secretary

Elyaqim Rubinstein said that the matters of the territories will be broached only in the negotiations on their permanent status, which will begin three years after autonomy is established. He stressed that Israel adheres to its position that Jews have the right to settle all over Eretz Yisra'el.

Reporter Disputes Sharon, Finds 30,000 Starts

TA2502150392 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 25 Feb 92 p 1

[By Niva Lanir]

[Text] The information presented by Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon on building starts in the territories is imprecise. Although the minister confirmed yesterday for the first time that 22,000 housing units are now in the building stage, the data he presented were said to include all building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

According to the data possessed by this DAVAR correspondent, that number is valid only for the West Bank and does not include building starts in the Gaza Strip, greater Jerusalem, or the 5,000 mobile homes whose deployment in the West Bank has still not been completed. In other words, the minister's announcement and the data known to this correspondent together indicate that the number of housing units now in the building stage in the territories is closer to 30,000 units. The cost of all housing being built in the territories has now reached between 7 and 8 billion shekels.

Construction and Housing Ministry publications in late 1991 referred to 18,273 building starts over 18 months between 1990-91 and 13,600 housing starts in 1991. DAVAR has learned that the data given for 1991 have been updated only to September, and that in the five months since then there have been at least 6,000 additional housing starts in the West Bank.

The data presented yesterday by Minister Sharon show that the previous information presented by his ministry was imprecise, and that puts into doubt also the information he issued yesterday. It seems that the minister can now attribute all the housing starts reported yesterday to 1991, in order to carry out another 7,000 housing starts that were approved in the 1992 budget. DAVAR has learned that in January and February 1992 there have already been another 2,000 building starts.

The working paper prepared prior to the negotiations with the Americans on the loan guarantees, which dealt with investment in the territories, surveyed activity for only nine months of 1991, and not the entire year, and it did not distinguish between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The document did not present information on building activity over the past five months and did not note that its data have not been updated to the eve of its presentation, February 1992.

The document does contain, however, a figure of 6,000 building starts for last year, a figure quoted several times recently by Secretary of State James Baker. That figure, 6,000 housing starts, has been published by the Central Bureau of Statistics as the number of housing starts for 1991, and is presented in the document as such.

Levi Appeals to Egypt on Espionage Affair

TA2402205192 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Foreign Minister David Levi today called on the Egyptian Government to take action to stop the mud-slinging campaign waged by Egyptian newspapers against Israel in the wake of the arrest of Israelis for alleged espionage. The foreign minister leveled very harsh criticism at the Egyptian media and urged the Egyptian Government to define the nature of the suspicions and the offenses attributed to the detainees.

Minister Levi's remarks were made in the Knesset in response to a motion on the agenda by Labor Knesset Member Moshe Shahal. Knesset Member Shahal also criticized the Egyptian media and praised the action taken by the Israeli Foreign Ministry in connection with this affair. [passage omitted]

Extended Detention of Furniture Dealer

TA2502115792 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 25 Feb 92 p 11

[Report by Smadar Peri]

[Excerpts] Despite Egyptian Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni's promise that Israeli furniture dealer David Ovitz, who is being detained in Cairo, would be released soon, his remand was extended yesterday for another two weeks. The reasons for the extension and the details of the suspicions against him were not given to Israeli Ambassador to Egypt Efrayim Dowek, despite all the appeals. [passage omitted]

While the "Israeli spies" festival is still in full swing, a new blood libel is developing in Egypt: A reporter for one of the opposition newspapers who interviewed Nabil Nabawi, an aide to the Egyptian interior minister, claims that Israel is smuggling thousands of watermelons, some of which have been injected with a carcinogenic substance, to the Bedouin in al-'Arish.

Tzvi Gabay, head of the Egypt desk at the Foreign Ministry, reacted: "I see there is no limit to a wild imagination."

Rabin on Settlement Freeze, Palestinian Autonomy

LD2502113192 London ITV TV Network in English 1900 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Report on interview with Labor Party leader Yitzhaq Rabin by correspondent Liz Donnoly in Israel on 24 February; from the "Channel 4 News" program—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Donnoly] The one man who many believe could inject real momentum into the peace process is Yitzhaq Rabin. We came to meet this newly elected leader of the opposition Labor Party who the polls suggest can defeat Mr. Shamir in the summer.

[Rabin] I believe that within six to nine months it will be possible to reach an agreement with the Palestinian delegation about the establishment of autonomy. It is an Israeli international commitment signed in the Camp David accords. I believe that it is possible; I believe it's the most important step to start a move on the long road towards peace. [passage omitted]

[Donnoly] Today he argues that for Israel peace is a priority and, unlike Mr. Shamir, he's willing to freeze most new building in the occupied territories, obviously hoping that this will persuade the United States to grant all the $10 billion in loan guarantees that are currently being withheld.

[Rabin] I'll freeze the settlements, or the buildings, in those areas which building there serves only political issues and not the security problems of Israel.

[Donnoly] But surely, Mr. Rabin, you've got a problem. Mr. Shamir's toughness reassured Israelis that you've got the job of trying to sell them compromise. How are you going to do that without suffering the same fate as your predecessor, Mr. Peres?

[Rabin] I don't want to elaborate too much. I believe that my credibility as a military man and minister of defense, hopefully will be some sort of reassurance to the people of Israel that if I will come to the conclusion that we can make compromise—and by no means we withdraw to the pre-Six Day War lines, by no means to agree to an independent Palestinian state between us and Jordan, and negotiating only with the Palestinians in the territories—will be reassuring enough for the people of Israel to support me and the Labor Party.

[Donnoly] Only after dealing with Palestinian autonomy and closer links with Jordan would Rabin address the question of Syria's claim to the Golan Heights. On this hotly disputed territory and on the West Bank, he says there's room for limited territorial compromise.

[Rabin] Compromise means that I'm ready, with great pain, to give up part of the territories, by no means to withdraw to the pre-Six Day War lines. Because I'm more realistic about, one, you can't achieve peace without compromise on both sides; and second, even more so, I don't want Israel to be a binational state.

[Donnoly] What Mr. Rabin has in mind falls far short of Palestinian aspirations for a state of their own, but many living in the occupied territories feel that if he wins a deal can be struck in the years to come.

[Rabin] I'm against swallowing 1.7 million Palestinians to be part of Israel and part of the Israeli citizens. I prefer Israel to be a Jewish democratic state. It is to say, at least 80 percent of its citizens will be Jewish.

Editorial Warns Against Election Intervention

TA2502113192 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 25 Feb 92 p 2

[Editorial: "A Bear Hug]

[Text] Yitzhaq Rabin's election as Labor's candidate for prime minister has apparently aroused a measure of expectation not only at Labor headquarters at 110 Hayarqon Street, Tel Aviv, but also in the White House. Since the 1977 upheaval, U.S. Administrations have had to deal with right-wing governments or a unity government dominated by the Likud. It is no secret that they would have preferred more pragmatic, Labor-led governments in Jerusalem, but they have so far justifiably taken care not to express their preferences publicly.

The U.S. decision to condition the loan guarantees on a settlement freeze—something the Shamir government cannot accept—came well before Rabin's victory in the Labor party. Bush and Baker would most likely not have softened their hard-line position even if the straw candidates Ora Namir and Yisra'el Qeysar had shown surprise victories. But the link they tried to create in Jerusalem or Washington between the loan guarantees and a government upheaval on 23 June embodies harmful intervention by a friendly superpower in the internal affairs of an ally. Moreover, it could turn into a bear hug and act like a boomerang in the elections. Rabin understands this very well, which is why he made haste to dissociate himself from what could be perceived as indirect U.S. intervention in the Israeli elections.

Israel does not have two governments, only one, which on 2 March will free itself from the business of forming Knesset lists in order to continue the peace process and the bargaining over the loan guarantees. Since no serious person can forecast who will win the elections and form the next government, the Americans are advised to continue talking to the Shamir government and to leave it to the Israeli voter to decide if he prefers settlements or immigrant absorption.

Protest on EC Envoy's Activities in Territories

TA2402114092 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Feb 92 p A1

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar]

[Text] Israel has filed a protest with the EC regarding the conduct of its envoy in the territories which, Jerusalem believes, was a gross violation of the rules set for his operations. Those rules were agreed upon in an exchange of letters between Israel and the EC, after an agreement on the issue was reached last June between Foreign Minister David Levi and the EC troika.

Mordekhay Drori, head of Israel's mission to the EC, last week submitted the complaint to Abel Matutes, EC commissioner in charge of relations with Mediterranean countries. EC Commission officials expressed their dissatisfaction with a series of incidents involving their

representative in the territories, Thomas Dupla. They promised that in the future they would see to it that Dupla maintains closer cooperation with Israel.

Israel claims that the representative did not act in the spirit of the agreements with the EC, according to which he can have no permanent address in Israel, can only pay a visit every few weeks, and cannot work from a permanent office nor conduct any activity that might suggest the presence of a "permanent EC consulate" in the territories. The EC representative does not bear a diplomatic passport, but Israel has granted him ex gratia diplomatic status.

During his visit in Israel some three months ago, Dupla settled in the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem and held a series of meetings with Palestinian notables there. The Palestinians examined possibilities for financing economic projects for several associations established in the territories for that purpose. Yehuda Milo, director of the Foreign Ministry's Europe 1 Division, accidentally learned that Dupla was in Israel. Milo held a meeting with Dupla, in which he told the EC representative that the hotel where he is staying serves as a center for Palestinian political and communication activity, and that the purpose of his mission here was not to establish a consulate in the territories, but to deal with financial and humanitarian aid.

Dupla maintained that his visit was scheduled at the last minute, and that therefore he could not contact the Foreign Ministry and ask for meetings with the appropriate officials. During his most recent visit here, last week, Dupla stayed in another hotel in East Jerusalem.

Israel's complaint also stated that the EC did not observe its agreement to conduct ongoing consultations with staffers of the Defense Ministry's Department for Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories regarding economic projects it wishes to finance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A diplomat of the EC representation in Tel Aviv said a few days ago that there was never an agreement that consultations with Israel would be held on those matters; the agreement only mentions reporting to Israel. He also denied remarks by Israeli officials that there is an unequivocal agreement according to which the EC representative to the territories is obligated to consult officials of the Department for Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories. According to the officials, the consultations were meant to ensure that funds are not delivered to hostile elements, or do not fall into the hands of swindlers.

During his recent visit, Dupla claimed that he could not locate Major General Dani Rothschild, coordinator of government activities in the territories, and was offered a meeting with Rothschild's deputy, Brigadier General Freddy Zakh. After angry remarks were exchanged and pressure applied, a meeting between the two [not further specified] was scheduled. In the meeting, Dupla said he did not come here to hold consultations, but to provide a general report about the economic projects, without going into detail.

British Official Meets Bin-Shakir, Abu-Jabir

JN2402145092 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received David Gilmore, secretary general of the British Foreign Office, at his office this morning. Present at the meeting were the foreign minister, Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir, and the British ambassador in Amman.

They discussed the latest developments in the peace process, the situation in the Middle East, and ways to promote bilateral relations in all fields.

Dr. Abu-Jabir received Mr. Gilmore at his office in the Foreign Ministry, in the presence of the Foreign Ministry secretary general. They discussed the latest developments in the region, Jordanian-British relations, and ways to promote them. [passage omitted]

Received by King Husayn

JN2402153492 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received David Gilmore, secretary general of the British Foreign Office, at the Royal Hashemite Court at noon today.

Gilmore listened to a comprehensive assessment by his majesty of the peace process. He was assured of Jordan's eagerness to make this process successful in achieving its final objective of establishing a just, durable, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. His majesty and the British official exchanged views on this process.

The British ambassador in Amman attended the meeting.

Bin-Shakir Visits Ministries, Views Economy

JN2302171892 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir said today the economic situation in the Kingdom required the cooperation of citizens, and collective efforts to face the difficulties.

The prime minister was speaking at a meeting with the minister of supply, who assured him of the good food situation in the Kingdom.

The prime minister asked ministry personnel to pursue a strict surveillance on the prices of various food commodities, and to deal with offenders.

The prime minister also visited the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and was briefed on new plans and exemptions aimed at stimulating industrial ventures.

Government Raises Fuel Prices

JN2302120692 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] An official source has stated the following: No doubt the citizens are well aware of the size and impact of the pressures faced by our country over the past few years, as well as the negative repercussions of these pressures on our economic and financial situation, which were felt by the citizen in his everyday life.

Because of the comprehensive nature of these pressures, they have become a national challenge for all of us, and we must face them collectively and comprehensively.

Despite the difficulty and harshness of this challenge, Jordan, with God's help and the citizens' support and solidarity, has been able to confront it and absorb a great deal of its impact. Hence, Jordan has become more able and determined to continue its efforts to overcome these challenges, and pursue its blessed national march with firmness and hope.

For the sake of maintaining Jordan's growth and productivity, efforts should be redoubled to ensure further self-reliance, which, God willing, will enable Jordan to continue facing and containing these challenges and outside pressures.

In order to achieve this, Jordan has adopted an integrated national program for economic revival and reform, aimed at resuming growth and, consequently, providing more job opportunities, curbing consumption, increasing the state's financial resouces, and reducing the deficit in the foreign balance of payments. Therefore, some financial and economic measures have been adopted. These include amending the prices of some oil by-products—diesel oil, first grade gasoline, and fuel oil for some industries.

The price of diesel oil has been raised for several reasons in particular, the most important of which is that a high percentage of it is consumed by trucks transiting Jordan or transporting goods abroad. Moreover, it is being sold locally at about 65 percent of the world price, and should be used economically and not wasted. Its use in economic activities which are proven not to be useful to the national economy in the medium term should be curbed.

The government has adopted the necessary measures to counter the effects of this decision by easing its impact on the citizens in general, and some sectors in particular.

Since the sector transporting goods inside, outside, and through Jordan is the main consumer of diesel oil, the tariff for transporting goods has been raised in proportion with the increased price. As for diesel oil used for heating homes, the government will compensate households whose monthly income does not exceed 300 dinars with no more than 100 dinars this year, bearing in mind that household consumption does not exceed 10 percent of the overall consumption of diesel oil. Moreover, owners of bakeries using diesel oil will be compensated

in order to maintain the present price of bread. In addition, farmers using diesel-run water pumps will also be compensated.

The prices of other oil by-products—kerosene, regular gasoline, and gas—will not change, due to their extensive use by all citizens, especially by medium and low-income people. The transportation fees charged by the Public Transportaion Corporation will remain unchanged.

By implementing these measures, all the necessary economic and financial measures for this year would have been completed in order to increase self-reliance. Thus, Jordan will be able to delay paying the bulk of its debts in 1992 and the first half of 1993. It will also continue to increase the country's foreign currency reserves, and thus guarantee a stable exchange rate of the dinar, and easily provide citizens with foreign currency for legitimate purposes.

Accordingly, the minister of supply has issued Decision No. 17 for 1992, increasing the prices of some oil by-products. The text of the decision is as follows:

According to the cabinet decision adopted on 31 December 1991, based on Paragraph B from Clause 7 of Supply Law No. 28 for 1988, and on the recommendation of the concerned quarters—the Ministry of Finance—it has been decided:

1. To fix the prices of the following oil by-products as follows:

A. First grade gasoline at 300 fils per liter.

B. Diesel oil at 105 fils per litre.

C. Fuel oil for industry at 65 dinars per tonne, excluding the electricity sector, which will continue to receive fuel oil at 41.4 dinars per tonne.

2. Consumers using diesel oil to centrally heat their houses, whose monthly income does not exceed 300 dinars, will be compensated by receiving up to 100 dinars in 1992. This sum will be paid from the public expenditure budget of the Ministry of Finance, in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy, through arrangements to be drawn up by the two ministries.

3. This decision shall be enforced as of 23 February 1992.

The deputy prime minister, who is also the minister of transportation, has decided to increase by 6 percent the rate of transporting goods inside and ouside the kingdom by diesel-run trucks, based on the cabinet's decision to raise the prices of diesel oil as of Sunday, 23 February 1992.

Finance Minister Comments

JN2302144292 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] The price adjustment for certain oil by-products—namely diesel oil, first grade gasoline, and fuel oil for some industries—has been adopted as a financial and economic measure within the framework of the self-reliance pursued by Jordan; a policy that, God willing, should make it possible to tackle and contain foreign challenges and pressures.

At the same time, the government has taken the necessary measures to cope with the consequences of this decision, so that the general public, particularly certain sectors, are cushioned against its impact. This measure will not affect medium and low-income groups. For further clarification of this decision in all its aspects, Finance Minister Basil Jardanah had this to say to our news desk:

[Begin Jardanah recording] Under the 1992 budget, generous allocations went toward expanding social services and raising incomes, including military personnel, civilians, and pensioners. The budget also introduced around 8,000 new jobs. Financially speaking, this expansion entails a high cost, which must be met. As part of the government's overall policy required by the economic revival and reform program, measures were taken to cut the budget deficit by 80 million dinars. This fuel price adjustment marks the last of these measures. These measures should help maintain the exchange rate of the dinar and boost the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves, as well as secure foreign currency for legitimate purposes. They will also have a noticeably favorable impact on the climate of investment, and should bolster economic activity in the Kingdom. With a view to maintaining income levels in the medium and low-income sectors, the government has taken a number of measures, which have been made public. [end recording]

Editorial Backs Decision

JN2402110592 Amman AL-RAY in Arabic 24 Feb 92 pp 1, 19

[Editorial: "We Will Confront the Pressures and Defeat Them"]

[Text] This time, the government has not told us that it has decided to adjust the prices of diesel oil, first grade gasoline, and fuel oil in the interest of the citizens and out of concern for their comfort. Instead, it told us the clear, frank, and beautiful truth. This is why the citizens have received the decision about the price hikes with pride as well as pain.

If lowering our heads and keeping our heads low, so that commodity prices do not increase by one fil, is required to lower prices, then we—leadership, citizens, and government—are with this noble and courageous decision. We are for enduring the hardship, and with the relentless efforts to absorb and overcome this hardship, because as we know, the alternative is for our bellies to become bloated in return for lowering our heads; our stomachs are full in return for emptying our hearts and minds of loyalty and affiliation to this nation.

We cannot confront the pressures which this country is facing without bearing the hardships that we have to bear in order to confront all attempts at attacking us; breaking our national and pan-Arab resolve; undermining our decision and position; and undermining all the pride we felt when we decided to be in the nation's trench, and not in the trench of its enemies; when we decided to be with ourselves and not against our values; and when we endured the cruelty of the brother, betrayal of the friend, and conspiracy of the enemy without being shaken and without accepting bread or giving it to our children while being humiliated.

We do not view the statement given by the government of al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir on the reasons for the price increases—and we do not accept that the government views the statement—as justification for its decision. Rather, we see it merely as another stance of pride in order to make others aware that this country, this leadership, and this family are able to endure and overcome all pressures and receive all stabs, and then heal the wounds. This is because we are not the ones who shed their Arab skin through pressure or bribe. No one who has ambitions against this homeland or who hates or conspires against it can drive us one step away from what we view as affiliation, whose price we pay with dignity and loyalty and to which we will adhere with all necessary sacrifices.

We know that we may face more challenges, and that we may suffer more hardship than that we have suffered thus far, but we also know that this homeland which we love, with all its people and its leadership, has never shrunk from challenges, and has never lived a single day without pressures aimed at breaking its bones and determination. It has always remained steadfast—the one that builds, progresses, and assumes its position in its greater homeland and nation with all the pride and admiration it deserves.

Losses From al-'Aqabah Blockade Reported

JN2302103992 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 23 Feb 92 p 1

[Text] Amman, SAWT AL-SHA'B—Tawfiq Qa'war, president of the Shipping Agents Association, has said that multinational forces continue to enforce a naval blockade on al-'Aqabah port.

Qa'war added that the losses sustained by the Jordanian economy as a result of the blockade imposed on al-'Aqabah and the inspection operations are in the region of $46 million. Furthermore, $23 million in inspection fees has been paid by ships heading for and leaving al-'Aqabah, he noted.

Qa'war noted that inspection officers had prevented ships loaded with sugar and rice from continuing to al-'Aqabah, on the pretext that it was difficult for them to reach the ship's lower holds to inspect them.

UN Envoy Denies Hizballah Prevented Kafra Entry

NC2502210992 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Marrack Goulding, UN assistant secretary general, has denied that Hizballah militants prevented him from entering the village of Kafra.

A spokesman for the UN secretary general said Goulding went on foot to Kafra after [words indistinct]. On his way to the village, Goulding encountered an armed group from Hizballah, which tried to prevent him from proceeding to the village. [passage indistinct].

[Paris AFP in English at 1950 GMT on 25 February in a similar report adds: "U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani in New York quoted Goulding as saying snow blocking the roads had forced Goulding to enter the village on foot Tuesday and that armed members of the Hizballah had attempted to block his way.

["But the group allowed Goulding to enter the village after they discovered his identity, Giuliani said, adding that after Goulding continued on, a member of the group fired in the air."]

French Parliamentary Delegation Meets With Leaders

NC2602085492 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Excerpts] A French parliamentary delegation, led by Gerard Bapt, visited President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami, and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz today. The delegation also visited the Chamber of Deputies, where they met with Amin al-Hafiz, chairman of the parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs.

Bapt described his meeting with President al-Hirawi as useful and voiced his support for UN Resolution 425, particularly now that the Lebanese state has proven its ability to cope with difficult situations. He said that the goal of French and Italian aid to Lebanon is to support the Lebanese Government's quest for peace.

Speaking to the French delegation, Prime Minister Karami said that Lebanon is part of the region, and that it also desires peace. Unless a just peace is established throughout the region, he added, no part of it can enjoy peace.

Karami added that Lebanon will not seek a unilateral peace. This is why we had our reservations on the Moscow talks, he said, adding: We have U.S. assurances that Resolution 425 will be separated from the region's crisis. [passage omitted]

The French delegation asked Karami about the Syrian withdrawal, scheduled for September. He said: The al-Ta'if Accord is no longer a purely Lebanese agreement; it is a Lebanese, Arab, and international agreement with certain stipulations to which all are committed. [passage omitted]

Sa'adah Returns From Damascus, Comments on Talks

NC2302114492 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] Dr. George Sa'adah, Phalangist Party leader and minister of telecommunications and post, returned from Damascus to Beirut at 1200 today. He had visited Damascus yesterday in response to an official invitation from the Syrian Government.

Upon his return, he met with and briefed President Ilyas al-Hirawi on the outcome of his contacts in the presence of Agriculture Minister Muhsin Dallul.

Dr. Sa'adah met yesterday with 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Syrian vice president, and General Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff, and reviewed with them the latest developments in Lebanon, especially concerning the situation in the south.

Sa'adah also met in the Syrian capital with his counterpart, the communications minister. They discussed the status of communications between Lebanon and Syria and the progress of work to consolidate telephone links between the two countries, especially the joint international marine cables.

Minister Sa'adah extended an official invitation to his Syrian counterpart to visit Lebanon and continue discussion on these topics.

Al-Husayni Denies Government 'Incompetent'

NC2402180992 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] Speaker Husayn al-Husayni has said that Israel wishes to suggest that the Lebanese Government is incapable of doing anything regarding resistance activities in the south. This is not true, because the Lebanese people are the resistance. The Lebanese Government is not incompetent. It adheres to its commitments, and its Armed Forces will perform their duty in implementing international resolutions, especially when the international community performs its tasks and when the credibility of international legitimacy is strengthened.

New Parliamentary Grouping Announced

NC2202205492 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Text] The establishment of a new parliamentary bloc under the name of the National Parliamentary Grouping [al-tajammu' al-niyabi al-watani] was announced today at a news conference attended by Deputies Sulayman Tony Franjiyah, Ilyas Saba, 'Abdallah al-Rasi, 'Ali 'Id, Salim Sa'adah, and Istifan al-Duwayhi.

Al-Rasi delivered a statement on behalf of the deputies, in which he outlined the grouping's principles, which are: Adherence to the republican, parliamentary system; implementation of the national accord and Resolution 425; finding a solution to the problem of the displaced people; and abolishing political sectarianism.

Control, Inspection Agreement Signed With IAEA

JN2602082692 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Text] Syria and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] have signed an agreement in Vienna on the control and inspection of Syria's nuclear facilities. The agency also received assurances about these facilities.

An IAEA spokesman said that the establishment of a research plant bought from China will be discussed at the Vienna meetings. Since agreeing to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty on 24 [month not given] 1969, Syria has never signed an agreement like yesterday's.

Tunisian Prime Minister Visits Damascus

Arrives 24 Feb

JN2502073692 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The Tunisian prime minister, Dr. Hamed Karoui, arrived in Damascus tonight on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi led the welcoming party at Damascus International Airport. He was also greeted by Mr. Nasir Qaddur, state minister for foreign affairs, and Tunisian Ambassador in Damascus Mohamed Khalil Fadhil. After shaking hands with the deputy prime minister for services, cabinet ministers, and staffers at the Tunisian Embassy, al-Zu'bi and Karoui drove in an official motorcade to al-Rawdah Palace, where the Tunisian prime minister will be staying.

In a statement upon arrival, Dr. Karoui told SANA he is happy to be visiting Damascus for the second round of the Higher Joint Syrian-Tunisian Committee in response to an invitation from Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi. He is carrying a message of brotherhood and appreciation from President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to his brother, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. Karoui said: My meeting with the prime minister will be an opportunity for us to consider issues of shared interest and to enhance cooperation. We will be discussing international and regional developments, since fast-moving global developments require that we exert ourselves to restore Arab solidarity for the sake of pan-Arab interests, and so that the Arab homeland is not marginalized in the context of the new world order, which we hope will be more even-handed, he added. Dr. Karoui concluded his statement by saying that the Damascus meetings should give a fresh impetus to the existing excellent ties between Syria and Tunisia. These relations should be deepened by the meetings of the higher joint committee, so as to benefit the aspirations of our two brotherly states for prosperity in the overall Arab interest.

Dr. Karoui is accompanied by an official Tunisian delegation made up of National Economy Minister Sadok Rabah; Culture Minister Monji Bousnina; Fathi al-Waydi, state minister at the prime minister's office in charge of media affairs; Said Ben Moustafa, state secretary at the minister of foreign affairs' office; and advisers and experts.

Discusses Ties With al-Zu'bi

JN2502103592 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0935 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Damascus, 25 Feb (SANA)—Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi received Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui at 1000 today.

They discussed bilateral ties, and ways to develop them and bolster cooperation and integration between the two fraternal countries. The talks also dealt with the situation in the region.

Joint Committee Meets

JN2502174892 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Excerpts] The second round of the Higher Joint Syrian-Tunisian Committee convened its first meeting at 1030 today. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi led the Syrian side to the talks, and Tunisia's Hamed Karoui led his country's delegation. [passage omitted]

Al-Zu'bi welcomed Dr. Karoui and his delegation. He pointed out that the meeting between Damascus and Tunis symbolizes a pan-Arab link between the eastern and western ends of the Arab world, and furnishes a model for other Arab states to emulate as they seek to foster cooperation, integration, and a united Arab posture on issues of interest to the Arab nation. [passage omitted]

Al-Zu'bi noted Israel's belligerent and expansionist policies, which keep creating obstacles to the efforts being made in pursuit of a fair and comprehensive peace in the region, a peace founded on relevant UN resolutions—particularly Resolutions 242 and 338, which deal with withdrawal from occupied Arab territories and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. [passage omitted]

Dr. Karoui thanked Mr. al-Zu'bi and the Syrian Government for the hospitality and welcome with which the Tunisian delegation had been received in Damascus. He emphasized that the common goals and brotherly ties binding Syria and Tunisia serve to boost their economic and social integration, as well as embodying the basic outlooks of Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Unless progress is made in the bilateral talks, Karoui stressed, multilateral talks remain pointless. He also asserted the need for compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, to secure Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and to ensure Palestinian national rights. The Tunisian prime minister called on the international community to pressure Israel to halt settlement activities and its aggressions against southern Lebanon, which have put the peace process at risk. [passage omitted]

Dr. Karoui emphasized the need for increased bilateral ties in the economic, social, and cultural spheres, and to upgrade two-way trade. He also noted the need to evaluate past cooperation in the interest of taking further steps toward increased cooperation, investment, and joint ventures by Syrian and Tunisian enterpreneurs. [passage omitted]

The two sides reviewed the work of the committee which had prepared the agenda for the higher joint committee talks. The agenda features items on trade exchanges, industrial and agricultural cooperation, the generation of electricity, transport, communications, tourism, education, culture, health, construction, housing, local administration, and the media; as well as cooperation between chambers of commerce and businessmen in the two countries. [passage omitted]

Israeli 'Terrorist, Aggressive Tendencies' Decried

JN2302075092 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 23 Feb 92

[From the press review]

[Text] In its commentary, the newspaper TISHRIN comments on Israeli terrorism against the backdrop of the recent events in southern Lebanon, which confirmed how ingrained terrorist and aggressive tendencies are within the minds of the Israeli enemy leaders, especially within the mind of Yitzhaq Shamir, who gives himself and his aides the liberty of ordering the shelling of cities, villages, and camps; displacing people; killing children, women, and the elderly; and destroying houses and property; and unleashes his troops to perpetrate more crimes under the pretext of combating terrorism.

TISRHIN adds: Out of faith in the sanctity of a just peace, the Arabs took part in the Madrid conference and the Washington talks. They also displayed full readiness to proceed along the path of reaching a true settlement, to end the occupation and injustice that have been the fate of the Palestinian people for several decades. They ran into the Israeli intransigence and procrastination, however. After several rounds of talks, the Israeli prime minister wants both land and peace.

Newspaper Says Israel Holds Peace 'In Contempt'

JN2302065992 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 23 Feb 92

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "The New Chance," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Once again, the Arabs, headed by Syria, have given the peace process a new chance by accepting the U.S. invitation to resume talks in Washington.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The Arabs are showing their goodwill by demonstrating a favorable response to peace efforts and to the U.S. endeavors in this regard, even though, at previous phases, they ran into Israel's intransigence, which has gone too far in its rejection of international resolutions and in its endeavors to thwart the entire peace process. As for Israel, it has hindered the new round of talks by starting a serious escalation of its aggression on southern Lebanon, and also by employing notorious terrorist means to kill defenseless civilians and escalate repression in the occupied Arab territories. This confirms that Israel is an aggressive entity that holds peace and its requirements in contempt.

'Final Test' of U.S. Credibility Seen in Talks

JN2502121692 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 25 Feb 92

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israel Has Deadlocked the Peace Process," AL-BA'TH writes: To coincide with the start of the latest round of Washington talks, and consistent with its anti-peace policy, Israel has stepped up its rhetoric, indicating a determination to pursue and intensify its settlement drive and build thousands of new housing units.

This escalation accompanies talks about the U.S. loan guarantees, and comes hard on the heels of a savage Zionist attack on southern Lebanon. AL-BA'TH adds: More than anything else, Israel wants to topple Resolution 425, calling for its withdrawal from southern Lebanon; and to secure $10 billion in loan guarantees to finance the absorption of ten million Jews, as well as divvying up water and natural resources.

The paper concludes by saying that it is now obvious that, thanks to Zionist Judaization, the peace process has reached a dead end, thus placing responsibility on the cosponsors of the peace conference—the United States in particular—to see to the implementation of all that was endorsed by international legitimacy.

Commenting on the persistent Israeli routine of throwing roadblocks in the path of the peace process, which belies its bellicose approach, AL-THAWRAH notes that, before the third round of the peace talks, Shamir declared that he will neither subscribe to a cessation of settlement activity in Judaea and Samaria, nor join any negotiations that may jeopardize the settlement drive.

The paper adds: All the world knows that for the peace talks to move forward, the relevant resolutions—specifically Resolutions 242, 338, and 425—will have to be implemented. Above all, this would entail an unambiguous Israeli commitment to these resolutions, and their provision for a halt to settlement and a total withdrawal from the occupied territories as a firm foundation for regional peace.

AL-THAWRAH continues: Assuming the United States is serious about the peace process, it is expected to act firmly and to pressure Israel into shedding its belligerent

and expansionist bent, and heeding resolutions of international legitimacy. The current round of the Washington talks amounts to a final test of the viability of the peace process and credibility of the U.S. Administration.

U.S. 'Silence' Over 'Challenges' Questioned

JN2202101092 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0850 GMT 22 Feb 92

[Text] Damascus, 22 Feb (SANA)—AL-THAWRAH has expressed its amazement at U.S. silence over challenges from the Israeli rulers, and wonders if this silence would shake U.S. credibility in the eyes of the Arabs and the world.

In an editorial by its editor in chief, 'Amid Khuli, the paper says that Israel no longer even needs to make excuses when it attacks Arabs, expands into their territory, and kills their sons. Likewise, Israel no longer cares about world public opinion, nor is it eager to appear as an advocate of peace.

The paper adds: Israel has turned its back completely on the world, thus revealing a face immersed in blood and claws that are dripping with aggression. In an obscene gesture, Israel has given the world a raspberry and brazenly defied it, especially with the start of the U.S. election campaign.

The paper wonders if talk about peace can make sense in light of Israeli bullying tactics, which are being practiced everywhere, without deterrence or resistance.

AL-THAWRAH also discusses Lebanon's steadfast position and Syria's backing of it, saying that Israel is fully aware that Lebanon will not retreat under pressure, and will not hesitate to make the right national decision—in coordination with Syria—regarding everything that relates to peace. Israel knows, consequently, that Syria will not abandon its sacred duty to support Lebanon by all available means. That is why Israel is following a well-planned policy to present the United States with a fait accompli while the United States is engaged in elections, and at a time when Washington is getting ready to host a new round of peace talks.

Concluding, the paper says that the next set of negotiations represents the most complex phase. The paper says that this phase requires the assertion of U.S. credibility and a serious U.S. stance in the face of Israeli bullying tactics.

Bangladesh

Rebel Media Report 20 Shot Dead by Burma Troops

BK2602080892 Hong Kong AFP in English 0758 GMT 26 Feb 92

[Text] Dhaka, Feb 26 (AFP)—At least 20 fleeing Moslem refugees were shot dead by Burmese soldiers near the border with Bangladesh, the dissident Arakan News Agency (ANA) said Wednesday.

ANA, quoting two refugees who managed to escape, said the incident occurred Monday in Buchidong township's Yong Song area.

It gave no other details, but earlier another refugee in Bangladesh's southeastern Teknaf town told AFP: "I saw at least 50 bodies of fleeing refugees as we crossed the forest on the border and possibly they were killed after failing to offer anything to the troops."

The Burmese Moslems, known as Rohingyas, have been fleeing to Bangladesh from Burma's western province by the thousands in the past few months, speaking of persecution by Burmese troops.

Officially 80,000 refugees are already in Bangladesh, while hundreds continue to come daily. Private agencies and refugees put the number at more than 100,000.

Refugees Allege Torture, Atrocities

BK2602024892 Hong Kong AFP in English 0238 GMT 26 Feb 92

[By Nadeem Qadir]

[Text] Teknaf, Bangladesh, Feb 26 (AFP)—Moslem refugees from Burma escaping to eastern Bangladesh every day say Rangoon's troops have let loose a reign of terror which recalls Nazi atrocities.

[Words indistinct] destruction of Moslem property is common, and crowded jails are living hells," said Mohammad Elias, who said he spent one month in a prison.

Elias said he and other prisoners had been forced to carry heavy crates or sacks of food and weapons, and beaten when they could not.

"One teenager was bayonetted to death when he failed to carry the bags and protested the beating," 26-year-old Elias said as he waited with his family to be taken to a refugee camp.

Abul Hossain, who said he was the head of his village in Burma's Mongdu province, said he was jailed for about two months in a small warehouse with 300 other people.

"Some died from suffocation or hunger and some from injuries received during torture which also included poking with bayonets," he said showing bruises in his body. "It is like what we heard about Nazi torture."

For food, he said they were given twice daily rice soaked in water in a coconut shell, which he described as "a drop of water in an ocean."

The Burmese Moslems, known as Rohingyas, have been fleeing to Bangladesh from Burma's western province by the thousands in the past few months speaking of persecution by Burmese troops.

Mohammad Yunus, president of the dissident group Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) said near a camp in Dhechua Palang that he could not say how many people had died from torture by Burmese troops.

"Mostly people were killed because of excessive beating, shot or thrown off the hills, while women are raped," he said, adding that he hoped his people would be able to return home soon.

Yunus, exiled in Bangladesh since 1990, said some of the people were lucky if they could bribe the troops and escape.

Jabul Hasan, a 60-year-old farmer said "I saw at least 50 bodies of fleeing refugees as we crossed the forest in the border and possibly they were killed after failing to offer anything to the troops."

He claimed some children were buried alive in front of their parents.

In the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, Additional Foreign Secretary Mahmud Ali said Tuesday that the health condition at the camps here was under control and that five medical teams were in place.

At the Naaf river port manned by the para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Burmese nationals arriving in two boats refused to comment about the situation on the other side of the border.

But two men who had earlier refused to speak later told an AFP correspondent in Teknaf's main bazaar, "there are informers amongst us, and so we followed you here."

The two said troops were demolishing mosques and Islamic schools in villages outside the main townships.

"We feel insecure as there are scattered incidents in the townships and troops were now carrying out atrocities in the villages," said one of them.

They also said 300 people in their town had so far been arrested after being accused of sympathizing with dissidents.

In Dhechua Palang Camp 2 near here, Zafr Ahmed, head of the RSO- backed Arakan News Agency, said "our only crime is being Moslems ... the Burmese troops tell us to go to Bangladesh, which is they is the land of our forefathers."

The Rohingyas, who lived in the southeastern part of what is Bangladesh today, left in 1948 either for business or to resettle in mostly Buddhist Burma after the Indian

sub-continent was partitioned in 1947 between India and East and West Pakistan.

East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971.

The store owner said Buddhist Burmese were being resettled on properties owned by Moslems who had fled to Bangladesh.

Islamic Bank, Red Crescent To Send Aid

BK2402164692 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Dec 92

[Excerpts] Finance Minister Saifur Rahman has said three new rural development projects will be taken up shortly with the assistance from the Islamic Development Bank [IDB]. The projects will include rural electrification, primary and secondary education, and development of rural infrastructure. The finance minister was talking to newsmen on his return to Dhaka after attending the 60th meeting of the IDB board of governors held in the Libyan capital of Tripoli recently. [passage omitted]

Mr. Saifur Rahman said the IDB conference had unequivocally condemned the atrocities perpetrated on the Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar government. A mission from IDB is scheduled to visit Bangladesh next week to make an on-the-spot assessment of extent and dimension of the problems of Rohingya Muslim refugees who have taken shelter in Bangladesh. The mission will devise ways and means for extending succor and relief to distressed humanity.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Red Crescent Society will provide all possible assistance for relief programs for the Rohingya refugees. The assurance came from the president of the Iranian Red Crescent Societ, Mr. (Wahid Z. Zaidi), during his meeting with the chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal, in Dhaka today.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1117 GMT on 24 February carries a Dhaka-datelined report which adds: "Bangladesh Finance Minister Saifur said here Monday that more than 100,000 Burmese refugees have taken shelter in Bangladesh. "More than 100,000 Moslems from Myanmar (Burma) had taken refuge in Bangladesh as victims of gross human rights violation," he told the official BSS news agency on his return from Libya after participating in a meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

["Earlier, the official figure was put at 50,000, while authorities said hundreds more continued to pour in every day.

["Rahman said the IDB conference "unequivocally condemned" the alleged atrocities by the Burmese troops on the Moslems.

["An IDB mission is scheduled to arrive here next week to assess the extent and dimension of the Burmese refugee situation, following which necessary aid will be sent," he said."]

'Dialogue' With Burma on Refugees

BK2502132892 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees are still crossing into Bangladesh from Myanmar [Burma] every day. A foreign office spokesman told newsmen in Dhaka on Tuesday [25 February] that at least 80,000 Rohingya refugees have so far crossed over to Bangladesh from Arakan region of Myanmar. Forty thousand of these refugees have been given shelter in six different camps in Cox's Bazaar and Bandarban. He said that Bangladesh received positive response from international agencies like United Nations High Commission for Refugees and World Food Program to help Rohingya refugees. The World Food Program and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees—UNHCR—are jointly working with the relief ministry for distribution of food and other relief materials among the Rohingya refugees. The official said that foreign NGO's [nongovernmental organizations] are also permitted to work under the directive of the government. According to the spokesman, a two-member London-based Amnesty International team is due in Dhaka on the 27th of this month to observe the situation. The government has appointed a joint secretary of the relief ministry to work as the relief coordinator. The government has also taken measures to receive food and aid for the refugees in Dhaka and Chittagong airports. The spokesman says the dialogue between Bangladesh and Myanmar [Burma] is still going on to send back the refugees to their homeland.

Foreign Ministry—Refugees Must Go

BK2502135192 Hong Kong AFP in English 1103 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Dhaka, Feb 25 (AFP)—Bangladesh is adamant that Moslem Burmese refugees who fled atrocities in their homeland must go back, a top Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

"Our position is clear," Additional Foreign Secretary Mahmud Ali told a press briefing. "They are Burmese and Rangoon has to take them back."

Ali said talks were going on at a diplomatic level on repatriating the refugees, who number 80,000 according to the government although other groups, including the refugees, put the figure at more than 100,000. The refugees, known as Rohingyas, started fleeing their homes early last year, alleging widespread atrocities and persecution by Burmese troops. Dhaka has always maintained that the refugees will be repatriated but has said they will not be forced back unless their safety is guaranteed.

The Foreign Ministry official told reporters that a visit here by Burmese Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw that was expected earlier this month but never took place was "still on" but he declined to give further details.

Earlier Tuesday, officials said a meeting chaired by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury decided to open the "Myanmar (Burma) Refugee Fund" for the better coordination of foreign aid and relief operations. The meeting discussed at length the refugee issue, including their speedy repatriation, the officials said.

Ali said a Relief and Rehabilitation Committee had also been set up, adding that the relief ministry was working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme to prepare a food distribution system in the five refugee camps in the southeastern district of Cox's Bazaar.

"The system will go into effect in about five weeks time," he said.

On the health situation described as "dramatic" by doctors, the spokesman said "it is now under control and five government medical teams are working in the camps." Doctors had said in Cox's Bazaar that diarrhoea, respiratory infections and skin diseases were rampant in the camps and were particularly affecting children under five years old.

Ali announced that restrictions on non-governmental organisations working in the refugees would be lifted but they would be "guided by the local administration."

Told that the rule was hampering relief operations, Ali curtly said "we have our rules and regulations," but refused to elaborate. He said the Europeon Community and several countries have offered help, but "now we will appeal individually to friendly countries."

The TELEGRAPH newspaper reported Tuesday that diplomats would be sent abroad with pleas from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for moral and material support for the refugees.

"Arrangements have been made at Dhaka's Zia International Airport and Chittagong Airport to receive aid for the refugees," Ali said.

He said a two-member Amnesty International team was expected to arrive here Thursday and would visit the refugee camps.

On neighbouring India's concern over the Bangladesh-Burma border situation, he said it was "positive," but refused to elaborate.

226 Tons of Food Distributed

BK2302162592 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Text] The World Food Program [WFP] has approved emergency food assistance of about $2 million for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The food aid is with rice, dal [lentils], and vegetable oil. These will be distributed to refugees in the camps being established by the government. The food aid will be part of a joint relief operation being organized by Bangladesh with the collaboration of UNHRC [UN High Commission for Refugees] Red Crescent, UNICEF, WFP.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has so far distributed 226 tons of emergency food aid among the Burmese refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban Districts. A large number of blankets have also been distributed.

UNHCR Allocates $1 Million

BK2102155692 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 21 Feb 92

[Text] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has announced the allocation of another $1 million in emergency funds for the Myanmar [Burmese] Rohingya Muslims who have taken shelter in Bangladesh. The announcement was given in Geneva today. The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees—UNHCR—said in a statement its representatives on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border had reported that the refugee influx has now reached 1,000 a day. It said it expects to allocate substantial further funds to help Bangladesh cope with the refugee problem after receiving a more detailed report from its mission.

Delegation's Visit to Belarus, Russia Viewed

BK2402163392 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 92

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] The signing of the agreement establishing diplomatic and consular relations between Bangladesh and Balarus opens a new chapter in friendship and understanding between Dhaka and Minsk. The agreement was signed on 21 February in Minsk by Minister of State for Textiles Abdul Mannan and the foreign minister of Balarus, Mr. Petr Kravchenko on behalf of the respective governments.

The Bangladesh minister of state is in Belarus capital on a goodwill visit. The Bangladesh-Belarus agreement provides for immediate establishment of diplomatic and consular relations which would be governed by the provisions of the Vienna Convention of 1961 and 1963 on diplomatic relations.

Earlier, the visiting minister of state had a meeting in Minsk with the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus Kebich. He also handed over a message of goodwill for Belarus head of state from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

One would like to note here that the minister of state for textiles is leading now an 18-member goodwill delegation from Bangladesh to the former Soviet republic, now forming independent state. This is the first high-level delegation sent by Bangladesh to the newly-independent states which were

earlier within the former Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics or the USSR. On the itinerary of the delegation are the visit to Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Seven of them are now members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS.

The Bangladesh delegation has already visited Moscow. Detailed rounds of discussions were held there on trade promotion and economic relations between the two sides. The 18-member delegation led by the state minister of textiles discussed ways and means for further strengthening bilateral relations with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, Russian Ministry of Trade and Mineral Resources, and Ministry of Industries in Moscow. The leader of the Bangladesh delegation held discussions with Mr. (Konatze), deputy minister for foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, on bilateral issues and closer cooperation in various issues of mutual interest. He also handed over a message of goodwill from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for the Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Earlier, the state minister had fruitful discussions with Mr. (Ivans), chairman of the committee for foreign economic relations. Both sides agreed to identify measures and take necessary steps for promotion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. The Russian side reiterated their willingness to promote and expand commercial exchanges and economic cooperation. They specifically mentioned continued and further cooperation in the development of the power sector in Bangladesh. They also showed interest in increasing Russian imports of new and nontraditional items besides tradional ones like jute, jute goods, etc. from Bangladesh.

After fruitful discussions with Russia and Belarus, the Bangladesh delegation will be holding discussions on trade and economic cooperation with other CIS countries on their itinerary. Now the visit by the country's first goodwill mission assumes special significance in view of the disruption caused to Bangladesh's erstwhile trade mostly under barter agreements with the former Soviet Union following its breakup. It is expected that the new ground will be prepared for establishing trade and economic links between Bangladesh and the breakaway independent states of the former USSR.

Iran

U.S. Stand on Israeli Loans No Policy 'Change'

NC2502213092 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Station commentary]

[Text] Our political commentary tonight discusses the conclusion of yesterday's session of peace talks between the Arab countries and the Zionist entity in Washington. This session of talks produced no tangible results. The Syrian and Zionist delegations differed on the interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242. The Israeli delegation offered its own interpretation of the resolution, thus barring any progress in the negotiations.

According to Washington reports, the recent Zionist attacks on south Lebanon cast a dark shadow on the talks between the Lebanese and Zionist delegations.

The failure of this first session of talks in Washington is in line with the Arab delegations' expectations about the future of this round of bilateral talks. These expectations, voiced on the eve of the talks, take into account the nature of Zionist policies, the stands adopted by the Zionist delegation during earlier rounds of negotiations, and the recent Zionist attacks on Lebanon. The Zionist delegation acted in a way calculated to prevent the discussion of serious and essential issues. Israel's objective is clear: It wants to push the negotiating process in a direction that guarantees that only its own aims are realized. The Arab countries, who hoped their attendance at the talks would lead to implementing UN Security Council resolutions, faced blatant Israeli intransigence. Tel Aviv submitted a peace-for-peace plan and continued its policy of building more Zionist settlements in the occupied territories. Israel is openly trying to impose its viewpoint on the other side by its intransigent stands.

On the other hand, the United States, which pretends to steer the negotiations toward the essential issues, has linked the $10-billion aid that the Zionist entity is requesting to halting the settlement program in occupied Palestine. Despite the positive impact this U.S. decision has had on the Arab delegations participating in the talks, the decision itself cannot be interpreted as a change in the U.S. policy of supporting Israel. The United States continues to extend total support to this entity. It also prevented the UN Security Council from passing a resolution condemning the recent Israeli attacks on south Lebanon. The United States ignores all Zionist violations of international law in its absolute support for this foundling entity.

Finally, we must refer to the reports on a change in the U.S. stand on the aid that Israel is requesting. Apparently, according to these reports, the U.S. secretary of state has agreed to Israel's continued building of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories in return for reducing the loans that Israel is requesting by 50 percent.

Jordanian Awqaf Minister Pays Visit

LD2602104292 Tehran IRNA in English 1051 GMT 25 Feb 92

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA—Tehran-Amman relations were discussed here Monday by Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Khatami and Jordanian Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Sheykh 'Izz-al-Din al-Khatib al-Tamini.

Referring to the Islamic civilization Khatami said the Western civilization cannot detach itself from the influence of the Islamic civilization since the former is the oldest and greatest civilization in history.

Stating that Iran is optimistic about the future of her ties with the Muslim nation of Jordan, Khatami called for expansion of bilateral cooperation and said Muslims of the world are mature enough to solve their own problems and boost their relations.

Calling Israel "the common enemy" of Muslims, al-Khatib emphasized resisting the Israeli regime.

He also invited Khatami to visit Jordan.

Al-Tamimi—Zionism 'Common Enemy'

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[Text] In a meeting this evening with Mr. Khatami, the minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Mr. Khatib al-Tamimi, the Jordanian minister for awqaf [Religious Endowments] and publicity, spoke of the common features shared by the Iranian and Jordanian nations, and called for increased cooperation between the two countries. He said that Zionism is the common enemy of Muslim nations and stressed the need for united struggle by Muslims in the face of the common enemy until the liberation of Jerusalem.

Mr. Khatami, for his part, described Islamic culture as the most important common feature shared by Iran and Jordan, and stressed the importance of the rapid expansion of cooperation between the two countries, and said: We Muslims must use all our resources in the interests of the world of Islam, and scientific and cultural cooperation must, undoubtedly, be given priority in the cooperation between Islamic countries.

Hizballah's Nasrallah: Struggle Will Continue

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[Text] Beirut, Feb. 26, IRNA—"Struggle against the Qods [Jerusalem] occupying regime must be continued with all possible means, in all possible forms, everywhere and unabated," Hizballah new Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah told IRNA here Tuesday.

In his first interview after taking the post on February 18, Nasrallah added that Hizballah's strategy is to continue the all-out struggle against the Zionist enemy. To this end, the Hizballah cooperates and coordinates its actions with other groups.

The Hizballah policy commits all its members to follow the late Imam Khomeyni's line and the guidelines of his successor Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, he told IRNA.

Nasrallah succeeded Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abbas Musawi who was martyred in a Zionist air raid on his motorcade along with his wife and six- year-old son February 16.

The new Hizballah leader said that the Christian and Muslim communities have lived together for centuries in Lebanon and that Hizballah is ready to cooperate with all Lebanese people including Christians to confront the common enemy, Israel.

Referring to the last week savage attack of the Zionist regime on southern Lebanon which was successfully repelled by the Muslim combatants, he said in recent months the Zionist regime has repeatedly threatended to wipe out Hizballah. The assassination of Musawi and the subsequent military aggression on Kafra and other regions were part of the plan to demoralize the Hizballah fighters. "This was the most foolish act of the Zionists because Musawi's martyrdom made the Hizballah combatants more resolute to continue their struggle," he said.

The coming days will prove that assassination of Musawi was the biggest mistake of the Zionist regime ever since its illegitimate creation, he reiterated.

Commenting on Arab-Israeli talks and participation of Lebanon in the negotiations, Nasrallah said it was a "grave mistake" which will put Lebanon on the verge of collapse. "Hizballah believes in fighting off the occupying enemy," he emphasized.

He said that Hizballah has strong bonds with Iran and Syria. "We pledge allegiance to Ayatollah Khamene'i, the revolutionary Muslim people of Iran and all the Muslim ummah," Nasrallah reaffirmed.